

BRITAIN AND EGYPT :
The Rise of Egyptian Nationalism

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"The Riddle of Egypt"



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read the chapters on Sudan irrigation, and
to the many British and Egyptian friends
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Egyptian affairs with me.*

M.T.S.

PART I

INTRODUCTION

THE more one ponders upon the achievement of Egypt in wrenching her independence from the greatest of the great victorious Allies after the European war, the more wonderful does it seem.

Britain anticipated her victory over Turkey by declaring a Protectorate over an important dependency which the Turkish Empire had held since 1517. Had Turkey and the Central Powers won the war, Egypt would presumably have had to be returned to Turkey. Britain having beaten the Turks, all the belligerents took it for granted that Egypt would pass from the suzerainty of Turkey to "the elastic circle of the British Empire." And so she did, but not for long.

The crux of the Egyptian question had lain for several decades in the demand of the Egyptian politicians for freedom from interference in their home affairs by Great Britain. After the war, to that demand was added the insistence upon the abolition by Great Britain of the Protectorate.

President Wilson's theory of self-determination captured the imagination of subject races, and,

indeed, of the dominant races as well, and to-day holds Imperialism in check ; but the President never for a moment imagined it need apply to a country so excellently managed as Egypt was by Britain, and he gave his blessing to the British Protectorate. But Egypt, who had relied upon President Wilson's pronouncements and had appealed for his support in her claims for self-determination, though for the moment taken aback, flatly refused to remain under the new suzerain Power, and on February 28th, 1922, self-determination won the day.

Nationalism had triumphed, but not completely. There still remained—and yet remain—four serious matters to be settled. The first three of these are of great importance to Egypt if the principle of self-determination is to be carried to its logical conclusion ; the fourth comes into a different category since, while it concerns Egypt to some extent, yet concerns another country and the rights and welfare of other peoples still more closely. But all four questions have a direct and vital bearing upon British communications, defence and commerce (usually classed together as “ the interests of the British Empire ”), and they affect as well the carrying out of certain moral obligations into which Great Britain has entered, and which, by tacit consent of the civilised world, she is obliged to fulfil. At the present moment the Egyptian Government will not abate one iota of its claim to be left *in sole*

control of Egypt and the Sudan. The British Government, on its side, does not see its way to evacuating Egypt or to altering its position in the Sudan. We have, therefore, a complete deadlock. With the refusal of the Egyptians to countenance the occupation of their country by British troops, and to come to any friendly agreement with Britain on the other points, Britain has now no legal standing in the country, and can only remain there in virtue of her military superiority. She can say, "*J'y suis, j'y reste,*" and that is all—a very undignified position to exchange for that of Protecting Power.

As the successor of Turkey, Britain's position was logical and just, and was, moreover, one which Moslems perfectly understand—the right of the conqueror. Egypt, under the Protectorate, could have been given all the freedom she now possesses ; even the troops could have been withdrawn, since there would then have been no question as to whose right it was to defend the country when necessity arose. Turkey kept no army in Egypt after the grant of autonomy to Mohammed Ali. There was no movement against the suzerainty of Turkey at any time since autonomy was granted. It must not be thought, however, that Egypt gained her independence from Turkey as some Egyptians and Turks would have us believe. In the treaty of Lausanne, Turkey renounced all

rights and titles over Egypt and over the Sudan as from November 5, 1914, the date when hostilities began between the two nations. Turkey thereby acknowledged Great Britain's right to Egypt as a result of the war.

Surely we are justified in thinking that our statesmen hardly realised the full force of their actions when they were induced, apparently merely for the sake of obtaining momentary peace and quiet, to surrender a logical and legal position as Egypt's overlord in the hope of striking a bargain later with the independent Egyptians that would regularise Britain's position as Occupying Power ! This was not the rash act of an Idealist Cabinet, full of good faith in the brotherhood of nations, but of a matter-of-fact Conservative-Liberal Coalition, with a Foreign Minister whose Imperialism was unimpeachable. And since this surrender took place we have seen the strange spectacle of a Labour Government endeavouring to hold the shadow after Conservatives and Liberals had thrown away the substance—seizing the mop to keep back the billows of ungovernable Nationalism after Mrs. Partington had thrown it down in despair.

To what are we to ascribe the unenviable position Britain now holds in Egypt ? In the following chapters on the rise of the new Nationalism in Egypt an attempt is made to trace the psychological

factors of the situation as they appear to an ordinary British resident of Egypt who has had peculiar opportunities of seeing repeated in post-war Egypt the extraordinary ineptitude and lack of foresight which have almost invariably characterised British statesmen when they have had to deal with serious problems in connection with Egypt. Think of the folly of the refusal of the British Government to ratify Sir Sidney Smith's first Al Arish Convention with the French in 1800 ; of the disgraceful result of the support given to the worse than worthless Mamelukes ; of Palmerston's stupid attitude towards the proposal to dig the Suez Canal ; read Lord Cromer's summing up of the statesmen of Britain over the tragic muddle of the evacuation of the Sudan. Truly Egypt seems to have seen the *pons asinorum* of British statesmen. Yet after floundering through seas of blood and diplomatic morasses fortune has sometimes seen fit to send the Government wiser men to rectify the mistakes of the muddlers, and these, though they have not saved the worst tragedies, have served to neutralise the effects of the crude mistakes of their predecessors. And, somehow or other, through it all Egypt has progressed towards Western civilisation.

The declaration of February 28, 1922, was a bold venture on the part of Lord Allenby, and it bid fair, at first, to solve the problem. But, alas, the mistakes of the earlier days of the peace-making

after the war are not apparently to be so easily wiped out. Britain has still to suffer from her failure to understand the post-war mind of Egypt, and Egypt has to suffer for the folly of her criminally impatient politicians. The riddle of Egypt's future is still unsolved, but surely it is not beyond the wit and wisdom of the men and women of Britain and Egypt combined to find a solution.

CHAPTER 1

GROWTH OF NATIONALISM AND CONSTITUTIONALISM

EGYPTIAN Nationalism has passed through three distinct phases since its inception in the days of the Khedive Ismail. The beginning of the movement which culminated in the Arabi rebellion—the first phase—may be traced to the attempt to broaden the outlook of Mohammedans by Jemal-ed-Din, an Afghan Moslem. He began his mission in Constantinople, and attracted much attention to his theories ; so much, in fact, that he was forced to leave the Ottoman capital. In Cairo, in 1871, he founded a school of liberal philosophy among the Ulema (the teachers, or learned persons) of Al Azhar, the great Moslem University. Jemal-ed-Din believed that constitutionalism was compatible with Islam, and should replace the absolutism to which Moslem countries were everywhere in subjection. He reminded his listeners in the discourses he gave that the Prophet had founded a commonwealth which had later been abused, and that autocratic Governments, such as Ismail Pasha's, were contrary to the spirit of Islam.

Through these doctrines there grew up a political reform movement in Al Azhar. Prominent among the students of Jemal-ed-Din was Sheikh Mohammed Abdu, who later became Grand Mufti (the Chief Moslem Law Doctor of the country. His opinions are called Fetwas. In Constantinople the chief Mufti is called the Sheikh-ul-Islam). Lord Cromer held a high opinion of Mohammed Abdu and of another Alim (learned person), Sheikh Mohammed Beyram, both of whom were deeply concerned with the problem of "how to bring Islam and its ways into harmony with modern society."

But the reform movement was not confined to Al Azhar. Outsiders among the important men of the day, as well as Army officers, also came under the spell of the idea of a constitution, driven thereto by the reckless extravagance of the Khedive Ismail, who was plunging the country deeper and deeper into financial ruin.

At that time (the early seventies of last century) Egypt had enjoyed thirty years of autonomy, obtained at the price of heavy tribute to the Sultans of Turkey, whose representatives had misruled the country since 1517. Home Rule had been wrenched from the suzerain power by the forceful Albanian, Mohammed Ali (the "Napoleon of the East"), and his grandson, Ismail, was occupying the Khedival throne when the troubles that led to the British occupation of Egypt began. Ismail

was a typical story-book Oriental despot, with a weakness for European methods of obtaining money, and the tale of his reign is like a chapter from the *Arabian Nights*. The picture is only spoilt when you peep behind the scenes and see the horrible sufferings of the benighted peasantry, who toiled and died to make the splendour which gave him fame. But his day of reckoning came.

It was Ismail's knowledge of the constitutional trend of opinion which led him, autocrat though he was, to toy with the idea of a constitution. In 1866 he had revived the assembly of notable men which had been established by Mohammed Ali and which his successor, Abbas, had suppressed. The assembly had but the vaguest notion of its duties, and had no powers. In 1878, as a result of the report of the Commission of Inquiry into the finances of the country, Ismail promised to govern under a system of ministerial responsibility, with Nubar Pasha as Prime Minister, and two Europeans, Sir Rivers Wilson and M. de Blignières, as Ministers of Finance and Public Works respectively—the first time that Europeans took an active part in the Government of the country. Soon tiring of this curtailment of his personal power, Ismail convoked the Assembly of Notables, and declared he would govern through it in a constitutional manner, which meant a return to his former autocratic methods, and this led to his downfall.

It was left to the ministry in which Arabi Pasha, as Minister of War, was the outstanding figure to produce the first Egyptian constitution with a democratic basis.

The attitude of the modern Nationalists to Arabi Pasha has surprised and even pained those friends of Egypt who regard him as a pioneer of Egyptian constitutional Government and a great leader in the fight for freedom from foreign interference, whether European or Turkish. The second Nationalist movement, headed by Mustafa Pasha Kamel and continued under Mohammed Bey Farid, had no good word for Arabi; and I have heard him spoken of with contempt by young Nationalists of to-day because the revolt he led was the immediate cause of the British occupation of Egypt. They seem incapable of appreciating the position which Arabi takes in the history of the rise of Egypt from a despotically ruled dependency of a crumbling Oriental Empire to an independent kingdom boasting a constitutional monarch and a democratically elected Parliament.

To such a point is this refusal to recognise Arabi's work for Egypt pushed that the newspaper *Al Siyasa*, an anti-Zaghlulist paper and the organ of the Parliamentary Opposition to Zaghlul's Government, could think of no better abuse for the great leader during the election campaign in the winter of 1923-4 than to compare him with

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Arabi thus : " We imagine that the present storm will soon blow over, as the Arabi storm disappeared in its time, because, like the latter, it is a storm of personal ambition, and not one of true patriotism and sound reason. We imagine that if Saad became a man of history, as Arabi was when he was still alive, people would read in the chapter devoted to him some facts which do not show him superior to Arabi. Like Arabi, Saad is an Azharite ; he has, like Arabi had, a limited knowledge, and he is equally presumptuous. He also alleges that he is inspired like a prophet on earth ; he attracts people by threats. Arabi used the sword, and Saad uses a sharp tongue. We only draw a comparison between the hero of 1882 and the hero of 1923, though the latter has not yet come under the judgment of history, because, like his predecessor, Saad Pasha is fond of hearing people shout for him, and he is like him, too, in that he cannot see far ahead " (*Al Siyasa*, October 9, 1923).

Nevertheless, no account of the rise of Nationalism and Constitutionalism in Egypt can be complete without giving Arabi and his supporters their proper place. The story of Arabi's life and meteoric career as a leader of men is, briefly, as follows :

Arabi was the son of a village sheikh (an elder or wise and holy man), and obtained some education at the Al Azhar University, where he came

later into contact with the leaders of the Moham-medan reform movement already mentioned. Until recently a complete University education in Egypt comprised profound knowledge of the Koran and of the laws based upon it, some mathematics, and a knowledge of Arabic grammar. To-day Al Azhar has advanced very little beyond this. Arabi, perhaps because of the claim of his family to direct descent from a grandson of the Prophet, was of a distinctly religious turn of mind, and was noted for his eloquence and habit of quoting Scripture. He was also an observer of the signs of the times and of the sufferings of the people under despotic rulership. When, therefore, discontent broke out in the army at (1) The treatment meted out to native officers by Circassians and Turks; (2) Arrears of pay; and (3) Labour exacted from soldiers, Arabi, with two other fellah officers, became its mouthpiece.

Ismail's reckless expenditure, and the awful burden of taxation thereby placed upon the people, had not escaped the group of reformers at Al Azhar, and their purview became broadened from a purely religious to a national and social basis. Their eyes were opened to the necessity of putting an end to autocratic rule, and, since the European control imposed upon Ismail by the Powers in no way lessened the burden of taxation—for the interest on the £100,000,000 debt was now being systematically

and regularly dragged from an already impoverished and brow-beaten people—the Europeans as well as their despotic ruler came also under the ban of the reformers. They supported the efforts of Arabi and the army and began to formulate political plans, and these plans almost unconsciously grew into a demand for constitutional government. In 1879 Ismail was deposed by the Sultan of Turkey (on the advice of the Powers) because, finding his financial leading-strings irksome, he had tried to shake them off ; and his more malleable son, Tewfik, was put in his place. Between 1879 and 1882 the army had mutinied three times and had obtained redress of their grievances. On the third occasion, in September, 1881, such was the growth of the reform movement, a demand for a constitutional form of government was put forward and, with great unwillingness, granted by Tewfik.

The spirit of national life was thus breathed into the hitherto inert masses of the Egyptian people, and a perusal of the inner history of that time reveals a pitiful record of the crushing of the germ of healthy national consciousness which had sprung out of the reforming zeal of a handful of enlightened religious thinkers and peasant soldiers. The Parliament granted by Tewfik began early in 1882 to feel its feet, and drew up a sort of "Thirty-nine Articles of Faith" in the form of an Organic Law. All might have gone well with the new democracy

but for one fateful article of the law—that wherein the Egyptian Parliament claimed the right to vote the annual Budget, or, at least, that half of it which pertained to the revenues for carrying on the business of the State, the other half being already ear-marked to pay the interest on the debts with which Ismail had saddled the nation. The European controllers were alarmed at this sign of advanced democratic government. They feared that, though the Egyptians pledged themselves to pay the interest on Ismail's loans, which had now become the National Debt, they would find means, through their power to vote salaries, of getting rid of those European officials whose business it was to supervise expenditure and control the finances on behalf of the bondholders. This was the rock which wrecked the newly floated constitution.

The Egyptian Parliamentarians upheld by the army, with Arabi now Minister of War, stuck to their demands, and not even the presence of French and English war vessels at Alexandria shook their determination to have something more than the mere semblance of a Parliament. Instead of giving way at the menace of the battleships, Arabi, as Minister of War, proceeded to strengthen his fortifications. France, whose anti-Nationalist policy had suddenly changed with the fall of Gambetta, was now for coming to an agreement with the

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Egyptian Nationalists, and refused to take part in the military interferences that followed. The Khedive Tewfik meanwhile was a shuttlecock between the Europeans and his new Parliament. Sometimes he leaned to the one side and sometimes to the other, and finally put himself under the protection of the British. The man of the moment was Arabi, to whom the defence of the country, after Tewfik's final defection, was entrusted by a Council of State composed of Azharites and Notables, hurriedly convened. He was ordered by the Sultan of Turkey, on the advice of the Powers, to cease repairing the forts at Alexandria. He refused to obey, and then followed the short, sharp struggle which ended in the routing of the Egyptian army at Tel-el-Kebir.

Arabi delivered up his sword to the British general, and stood on trial for his life on the charge of having "incited the Egyptians to arms against the Government of the Khedive, with having incited the people to civil war, and with having committed acts of destruction and pillage on Egyptian territory." But a number of people in Great Britain considered that Arabi's revolt had been a genuine effort to obtain freedom from despotism, and a committee was formed of such men as Frederic Harrison, Sir Wilfred Lawson, Sir Arthur Hobhouse, Wilfred Scawen Blunt (Arabi's personal friend and admirer), and others,

through whose efforts, not only was he defended by British barristers, but it was arranged beforehand that the sentence of death, which he could not escape, should be commuted to exile to a British possession. He was sent to Ceylon, and remained there until 1901, when, through the intervention of King Edward VII, then Prince of Wales, he was allowed to return to Egypt.

For an estimate of the movement which ended so disastrously we cannot do better than refer to Lord Cromer. In his report on Egypt for 1905 he wrote: "The idea which at the time obtained a certain amount of credence—that the Arabi movement was a military mutiny and nothing more—is wholly erroneous. It was, in its essence, a genuine revolt against misgovernment, such as has frequently happened in other countries." And again, in *Modern Egypt*, Lord Cromer wrote: "The true nature of the Arabi revolt was misunderstood. It was more than a military mutiny. It partook in some degree of a *bona fide* national movement. . . . I am distinctly of the opinion that an effort to guide it should have been made," though he admitted that the chances of failure predominated over those of success.

On leaving his native land for his long exile Arabi enumerated in a letter to the Press the reforms which he had hoped to achieve, and in

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delegating the work to Britain, which had temporarily (as was supposed) taken the reins of government, he said, "I leave Egypt with perfect tranquillity and confidence in the future, because I know that England cannot any longer delay the reforms which we have struggled for. In a short time the Anglo-French control will be abolished; Egypt will be no more in the hands of a myriad of foreign employees, filling every available post to the exclusion of the Egyptians; our native courts will be purified of abuses; codes of law will be enacted, and, which is more important, carried out; a Chamber of Notables (the Egyptian Parliament) will be instituted with a voice and a right of interference in the affairs of the Egyptian people; the swarms of usurers in the villages will be driven out. The English people, when they see all these things, will be able to realise the fact that my rebellion had a very strong justification. The son of an Egyptian fallah, I tried, to the best of my power, to secure all these good things for the dear country to which I belong, and which I love."

Commenting on his death, which occurred in September, 1911, Mr. Wilfred Scawen Blunt wrote in the *Eyewitness* of September 28 as follows:

"I am prepared to affirm that the poor hero of the revolution of 1882, who has just died silently at Cairo, was both a great man and a man

of genius. He was, we may at least say, *un borgne dans le pays des aveugles*, a dreamer of a great dream he very nearly materialised thirty years ago, and which, please God, shall yet some day be fully acknowledged as the beginning of a noble reality. It matters little to me that the London Press should make light of him, that his fellow-countrymen should have forgotten, or now partly misunderstood, his patriotic work. The thing he did remains, a true creation out of nothing—the Egyptian nationality.

“That this is no more than the truth I know of my personal knowledge. Egypt, as I first remember it before the revolution—before even the days of the Dual Control—was an independent principality, but it was not a nation. There was an Egyptian Government, but no Egyptian people. The mass of the population were known as the *fellaheen*—the cultivators; to European travellers as *les Arabes*—the Arabs. Both had become, in a measure, terms of contempt. Of ‘Egyptians’ there was as yet no question. The fellaheen consoled themselves for their racial disqualification by their pride as Moslems, but they had not learned to realise the dignity of their ancestral history. Arabi’s supreme merit was that he discovered himself the first of any to be an Egyptian, and that he had the inspiration to take an open pride in it. The idea was

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a novel one, and it at once took on with his fellow-sufferers from the joint alien rule of their oppressors, Circassian and European. It gained an immediate popular success, one which embraced, not the towns only, but all the population of the Lower Nile. There seemed a whole world of hope and expectation in the rediscovered name. In this Arabi's 'genius' lay, and in his having been able, by his eloquence, to persuade his unwarlike countrymen to take arms and fight in assertion of their nationhood. He failed; what matter? He had forced England to employ a regular army of 30,000 soldiers to suppress his army of Egyptian peasants. Egypt, from that moment, was a nation recognised; it could not be treated any longer as the mere plaything of the Khedivate. This was his achievement."

What became of the Nationalist movement when the Arabists had been put down?

When the British Occupation changed the aspect of Egyptian politics and scattered the "rebels," many of those who had worked to rid the country of absolute personal rule, and had helped to bring the short-lived constitution into being, retired, disappointed, into seclusion. A few statesmen, like Cherif, Riaz, and (later) Nubar, took office under the new régime, and entered into the reforms

which the occupying Power, in the person of Lord Cromer, set about inaugurating. They believed, as Arabi did when he was sent into exile, that, the necessary reforms once put in hand, the country would soon be rid of the British. The younger Egyptians then at school, or in the process of being Europeanised abroad, regarded the British with dislike and suspicion ; and this, as the years passed and the critical period in Egyptian finances was safely turned, and still the Occupying Power showed no signs of retiring, deepened into active animosity, which finally found expression in a definite political propaganda, led by Mustafa Kamel.

Kamel was studying law in France when he began his career as an exponent of Egyptian Nationalism. He had remarkable fluency as a speaker, even for an Egyptian, and his French admirers encouraged his anti-British campaign. In Egypt he soon gained a following by his oratory. His newspaper, *Al Lewa* (*The Standard*), maintained a vigorous stream of criticism and invective against the British Occupation which won him, for a time, the friendship of the Khedive, and he was made a pasha.

The Entente Cordiale of 1904 between France and Great Britain healed the breach which had existed between the two countries ever since the bombardment of Alexandria, and the Egyptian Nationalists thereafter lost a certain amount of

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moral support in France. But Kamel endeavoured to inspire his followers to continue their agitation even in their "isolation," as he called it, and fate conspired to give his movement a fillip in the shape of the Denshawai incident. The violent denunciation in the Nationalist Press of the punishment meted out to the villagers for their attack upon some British officers who were pigeon-shooting close to the village, led to the revival of an old Press law of the time of Arabi, and the editor of the *Lewa* and others were prosecuted and imprisoned for sedition.

Kamel died, still young, in 1908, and for a time the cause continued to gain rather than lose supporters. The great popular demonstration which took place in Cairo at his funeral was an eye-opener to the authorities as to the extent of his influence. The movement took a more aggressive tone under Farid Bey, and was probably not unaffected by the Young Turk movement at Constantinople, and its policy was to invite persecution and advertisement by every possible means.

The political murder of the Coptic Prime Minister, Butros Ghali Pasha, was a direct outcome of the Denshawai affair, for Butros had presided over the tribunal which had sentenced four of the villagers to death, two to life sentences of imprisonment, and others to various terms of imprisonment and flogging. But the assassination showed a

fanatical and criminal tendency which, in the post-war years, has unfortunately increased to such an extent as to deprive the Egyptian Nationalist movement of nearly all its dignity and honour. It was obvious that the milder régime which Sir Eldon Gorst had been sent to Egypt to inaugurate after the Denshawai incident had not in the least diminished the fury of the Nationalists against the Occupation, but what suppression of newspapers and the trial and imprisonment of their editors for sedition could not do, dissension among the leaders and the advent of Lord Kitchener accomplished. The movement was unfortunate in its second president, Farid Bey, who, though he spent all he possessed for the cause, and suffered imprisonment and exile, yet lacked his predecessor's personality and unifying control. Before Lord Kitchener had been a year in Cairo, the organisation Kamel had built up had gone to pieces ; its leader, in voluntary banishment to avoid further imprisonment, had resigned. The movement as a political organisation survived only among groups of students in Paris and Geneva, and other centres of education in Europe.

The National awakening of Arabi's day, which endeavoured to put the new wine of democratic ideals into the old skins of a reformed Islam, and which culminated politically, as we have seen, in a short-lived Parliament, lost all its picturesqueness

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in the following generation. The older movement, with its background of the ancient Azhar Mosque, and its turbaned and beautifully robed teachers, dreaming dreams of a reformed Islam, and seeing visions of their country freed from both absolutism^{is.} and foreign domination, was a great contrast to the trousered fraternity of Mustafa Kamel Pasha, with its party organisation, committees, secretaries, president, and vice-presidents, working, not in the dim precincts of a mosque, but courting publicity in the *salons* of some magnificent European hotel, and issuing pamphlets in French and English. The older Nationalism could not dissociate itself from Islam; modern Nationalism is the result of European contact, and love of Islam is replaced by political xenophobia. The older movement, because it was religious as well as anti-foreign, appealed to the emotions, and was understood to some extent at least by the ignorant peasant. The newer movement endeavoured to move European public opinion on its behalf, and its adherents were steeped in French and British Radical literature. It is not surprising, therefore, that the fellaheen were not greatly moved by Kamel Pasha. The movement which in the early eighties swept over Egypt, and roused a docile people to a pitch of enthusiasm unwillingly recognised by their enemies, but nevertheless a very obvious reality, owed its brief ascendancy to the fact that

it appealed directly to the understanding of the common people. It ended apparently disastrously, but it was successful in so far as it indicated that a naturally long-suffering, peaceful people had been, at last aroused from apathy. The peasant felt one thing and one thing only: he was cruelly oppressed; and he discovered that his ruler and the foreigners he employed were responsible for that oppression, and he speedily responded to Arabi's call.

Kamel Pasha found the issues not so simple. The condition of the fellah under the British administration had marvellously improved since the days of Arabi. He was no longer tortured by tax-gatherers till he had given up his last piastre; he was no longer forced to work by the lash without wages, food or shelter; his masters ill-used him at their peril. He had gained greatly in self-respect. In Arabi's time the fellah may be said to have taken his first step in the direction of political self-consciousness, but, once the pressure of despotism had been removed and British control had brought better conditions, he sank back into his usual indifference to all but his own personal concerns. His reawakening was to come later and to take a desperate form.

Thus we see that the movement under the Arabists for Islamic reform and freedom from absolute personal rule changed to an agitation

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under Mustafa Kamel for political freedom and self-government rather than for the reform of abuses. Arabi, the fellah-orator, with the Koran and the sword, was replaced by Kamel, the lawyer-orator, with his European manner and ideals. The one was treated as a "rebel"; his successor was called a "sedition-monger."

CHAPTER II

CROMERISM

ALMOST the whole of Lord Cromer's régime, which lasted from September 11, 1883, to May 6, 1907, intervened between the suppression of the Arabi revolt and the rise of the second phase of the Nationalist movement just described.

It is not my intention to analyse or even give a brief account of Lord Cromer's work in Egypt. Those who believe it was bad for Egypt will go on believing it, chiefly because they hold the theory that any foreign government must necessarily be bad for a nation ; while those who believe it was good will not move from their opinion, chiefly because they know that, in spite of theories of national freedom which the British nation holds, the lot of the mass of the Egyptians during Lord Cromer's régime became immeasurably more tolerable than it had ever been previously, whether under foreign or native rule.

Let one instance of the effect of Cromerism suffice. The abolition of that age-long institution—forced labour—was worth a bloody revolution in itself, yet it was won for the peasant, not by a sweep of the hand or by the signing of a scrap of

paper, but by a long, dogged fight between the British Government and the European Powers—the bondholders. It involved the payment of money for free labour in the place of forced, and this, in the bankrupt condition of the country's finances, was "not to be done." Yet, unless the mud was scooped out of the canals by the hands of the fellaheen, irrigation would come to a standstill, no crops would be grown, and no taxes paid. At one stage, progress in the struggle for the abolition of forced labour, which lasted altogether eight years, was only continued by the British Government promising, if necessary, to allow the payment of the interest on its Suez Canal shares to be postponed. The whole story of the "diplomatic bickerings which sometimes assumed an acute form, and at others lapsed into a chronic state of acerbity," is an illuminating example of the deadweight of "Internationalism"—which still exists—upon progress in Egypt. The guarding of the banks of the canals at the time of inundation is still done by voluntary labour by the villagers, and grumblings are sometimes heard because rich landowners do not take their full share of the burden; this, however, is a totally different matter from the task imposed by the authorities upon the human dredgers of past days.

Few who criticise Lord Cromer's anglicising of the administration—Cromerism, as it is called—

realise that Lord Cromer was no believer in bringing Egypt completely within "the elastic circle of the British Empire." In the last chapter of *Modern Egypt* he says: "Egypt must eventually either become autonomous or it must be incorporated into the British Empire. Personally, I am decidedly in favour of the former of these alternatives."

Holding these views, it may be asked, How came it about that the British personnel in the Government steadily increased, until by the end of the war it numbered altogether 1,600? Why, as the years passed and young Egyptians were qualifying themselves in Europe for government posts, were Oxford and Cambridge graduates still drafted into the Egyptian Civil Service? The system had its origin in the desire for efficiency and economy. With but a limited amount of money to spend upon irrigation and other works of public utility, it was highly necessary to make every piastre go as far as it could. A British engineer, for example, could be relied upon to ask only for the lowest credit he would require to carry out certain projects, and then to find ways and means of making the very most of the sum allocated. His sense of responsibility was his chief asset. The average Egyptian, on the contrary, dislikes responsibility and is much happier in routine work, and his lack of initiative, or fear of making a mistake and perhaps losing promotion, or even his job, will cause

him to hold up a project indefinitely which ought to be put in hand at once. Therefore, men with ingenuity, resourcefulness, and the sense of responsibility, financial and other, were in demand, and it became the habit of departments to apply for junior British officials as Egypt's Civil Service, with increasing prosperity, widened ; and millions of pounds were thereby, in the long run, saved to the country, even though the foreign officials took higher salaries. It must not be supposed that the desired qualities were absolutely lacking among Egyptians, though efficiency is certainly not one of their attributes.

The foregoing explanations will not, I know, satisfy those who believe that there was a deliberate determination on the part of the British administration to prevent Egyptians from fitting themselves to carry on the Government of their own country. The complete anglicising of the administration was an undoubted scandal, particularly in the years immediately preceding and just after the war. During the war many Egyptians were given responsible posts, only to have to relinquish them when hostilities ceased. The British officials themselves were, as a body, far from wishing to keep Egyptians out of their rightful places in the administration. Most of those I have known always testified to the many virtues of their Egyptian colleagues. The following letter, written in

1919, was received by a friend interested in agriculture who, from time to time sent his views on local problems, and particularly those affecting the fellaheen, to the authorities concerned. I never met the writer but I know he expressed, in breezy language it is true, the feelings of many of his colleagues :

“ I got the copies of your notes, and we—that is, a company of the underpaid official class, poor devils—read them in the train from Cairo here, and voted unanimously that your ideas were very sound. You must harp and harp again on the theme that the fellaheen and not the effendi is the thing that matters ; eleven-twelfths of the population, exploited and likely to be ruined by the other twelfth ; stick to that ; and go for Cairo, which sits like Jove on an Olympian throne and only hears the louder noises that reach it through the clouds. God ! if you only realised how out of touch Cairo is with the decent poor folk of the villages. And one thing certainly is being done *all* wrong : the getting in of Europeans in the lower paid ‘ technical ’ jobs, because natives aren’t fit technically yet. We oughtn’t to have a single European in any job unless he’s a sahib, and I’ll swear we ought to put up with any God’s quantity of rather slovenly output, e.g. bad printing, slow repairing of motors, etc.,

rather than supplant Gypgies. If you get a European in to show them how, on grounds of efficiency, he ought to come in on a two years' contract merely to train Gyppy successors; if he can't do it in two years, out he goes; if he can, he can also go—with a Nile boil—and feel he's paid our duty to the Gyppy."

Though agreeing with the altruistic sentiments expressed in this letter, I think if one may judge the Egyptian of the future by the present-day educated Egyptian, it will be years, perhaps even generations, before foreign help can be entirely dispensed with in some of the highly specialised scientific posts, such as those connected with the entomological side of agriculture. The scientific mind is the result of a particular social inheritance, and is not the product of universal elementary education or independent political institutions.

But not only was Lord Cromer not in favour of Egypt's incorporation into the British Empire; strange as it may seem, in view of the Europeanising of the administration which took place under his almost despotic rule, it was not his wish to keep Egypt for ever in administrative swaddling clothes. In the chapter referred to above he says: "It does not appear to me that we need stay in Egypt, merely to carry out certain administrative reforms however desirable they may be, unless those reforms

are so essential that their non-execution would contribute to produce serious political or financial complications after the British garrison is withdrawn. All that we have to do is to leave behind us a fairly good, strong, and—above all things—stable Government, which will obviate anarchy and bankruptcy, and will thus prevent the Egyptian Question from again becoming a serious cause of trouble to Europe. We need not inquire too minutely into the acts of such a Government. In order to ensure its stability, it should possess a certain liberty of action, even although it may use that liberty in a manner which would not always be in accordance with our views. But it is essential that, subsequent to the evacuation, the Government should, broadly speaking, act on principles which will be in conformity with the commonplace requirements of Western civilisation."

It may be asked, did Lord Cromer do anything for Egypt beyond winning "the race against bankruptcy," and setting up a "stable Government" in the land? What would be the opinion of a pasha, of a fellah?

It so happened, on the day of Lord Cromer's departure from Egypt, that a friend of mine who has a large business connection in Egypt, and numbers many Egyptians among his clients, had an opportunity of finding this out. He received a visit from a pasha with whom he was on the

friendliest terms, and the following conversation took place in Arabic :

“ Well, pasha, what is your opinion of Cromer now he has gone ? ”

A string of well-phrased curses was the reply.

“ Yes, yes, I understand perfectly. But have you nothing to say about the result of Lord Cromer’s work during the last quarter of a century ? ”

“ I have this to say,” said the pasha sternly. “ Before he came a pasha was a pasha ; now those animals of fellaheen think they are as good as we are ! ”

Later on in the same day, my friend had an interview with a fellah, and, out of curiosity, also asked him what he thought of the departed British Agent.

“ One goes and another comes,” was the fellah’s non-committal answer.

“ Yes, of course, but has Lord Cromer made no difference to the country at all ? ”

“ He did one thing,” said the fellah, brightening up. “ Before he came we fellaheen were but animals in the eyes of the pashas. Now, praised be Allah, we know we are men, even as they are. That Cromer did for us.”

This may sound like one of those stories that “ go the round,” but I can vouch for the perfect accuracy of the incident, and I fancy Lord Cromer would have felt, had he known of it, that he was well repaid for his life’s work by this double testimony.

CHAPTER III

" KITCHENER REX "

LORD KITCHENER'S rule in Egypt was not unpopular. Had there been no war, and had Lord Kitchener embraced the Mohammedan religion, there is no limit to the power he might have obtained. He certainly identified himself more with the Egyptian people than did Abbas Hilmy Pasha, the Khedive, and he was far more accessible. Pashas and sheikhs would go and talk over provincial matters with him, for he spoke Arabic—unlike Lord Cromer, who, I believe, only knew Turkish—and he took an almost passionate interest in the fellaheen. I have often asked Egyptians what they thought of Lord Kitchener, and the answer invariably was that he was a *ragil taiyib*—a fine man—the only drawback from their point of view was that he belonged to an alien ruling race. So, however, did Mohammed Ali.

The Nationalist group, of course, had no love for the great soldier. He began by suppressing certain vituperative organs of their Press and by preventing political demonstrations of students. These and other acts were characterised by the Radical

writers at home as " a display of petty and stupid despotism," but it is the despotism that the Oriental understands, and of which, we may take it, the Egyptian approves, for did not Zaghlul Pasha, soon after he became Premier, do exactly the same thing with the Opposition organs whose criticisms annoyed him? Newspapers in independent Egypt have been suppressed, and their editors arrested and brought *handcuffed* to trial, a thing not matched even during the worst period of the war and post-war censorship. Zaghlul, too, was only prevented at the end of its first session by a very determined Chamber of Deputies, which for once went into Opposition almost *en bloc*, from passing a law forbidding public meetings except by license from the Ministry of the Interior.

Commenting upon the beginning of Lord Kitchener's régime, Mr. Wilfred Scawen Blunt's little London weekly, called *Egypt*, said: " The truth, of course, is that it requires no superior knowledge or superior moral authority to act the part that Lord Kitchener is now playing. Every foolish autocrat in history who has sowed the seeds of a revolution that brought his throne to the dust has boasted of the ' firm ' and ' strong ' hand. The despot's rôle is, after all, the simplest of all rôles to play."

I doubt very much whether Lord Kitchener's rule would ever have brought about a revolution.

The Oriental loves to feel he has a master. Zaghlul Pasha would never have been tolerated, let alone adored as he has been, had he been "reasonable," like, say, Adly and Ziwar Pashas, who are every bit as patriotic as Zaghlul—perhaps even greater patriots, for they have dared to do unpopular things because they thought they were right, which Zaghlul has never done, perhaps with the single exception of sending squads of armed police to quell some schoolboys who were making themselves a nuisance in his Minister of Education days, long before he had learned to love the applause of the people above all else.

Lord Kitchener was an Oriental in many respects. He was certainly a despot, but his despotism in Egypt was bent for the good of the country, and at the moment of his death there were thousands of fellaheen who sincerely mourned his loss. A friend who knows the vernacular as well as classical Arabic well, and whose business takes him occasionally into the by-ways of the country, wrote to me at this time and said: "When travelling in the villages of the Delta last week, I was very interested to hear from the simple fellaheen how much they felt the loss of Kitchener. Sitting round in the moonlight they said: "Sir Kitchener was first a soldier, a mighty soldier. Secondly, he was a fellah (farmer) like ourselves. He loved the land and those who find their existence in working it.

It was Kitchener who arranged for us the ' five feddans.'¹ It was Kitchener who saw the need of roads and commenced making them. It was Kitchener who saw our oppression under the heavy and unjust hand of the moneylender, and had he been spared to Egypt another five years he would have become our great deliverer from the cursed European and other robbers who so long have robbed us on every side. Kitchener understood the position of the fellaheen and came to our help. We loved him as a father, and we are naming our children after him—Kitchener Mohammed, etc."

I have never come across a little Kitchener Mohammed, but that Egyptians in moment of affection for foreigners do give foreign names to their children is a well-known fact, though the Welsh name of Idris is, I believe, not borrowed from the immortal Idris (Arthur) of the Round Table, but is Arabic. William Makram Obeid, one of Zaghlul's closest friends, was very much distressed a few years ago by his unfortunate Christian name, and endeavoured to change it to something more thoroughly Egyptian.

¹ The Five Feddan Law gave protection to the small cultivator of five feddans and under against expropriation of his land, house, and farming utensils for debt. The protection of the poorer fellah in this manner was rendered necessary by the action of the small foreign users, who lent money on mortgage to the fellaheen at exorbitant rates of interest, thirty or forty per cent., and even higher being not unusual charges. A census of fellaheen indebtedness undertaken at the suggestion of Lord Kitchener, proved the fellaheen to owe at least £16,000,000.

But Lord Kitchener had his critics, even among the British community in Egypt. "He consults nobody," growled a British business man in Cairo one day in 1914. And yet not more than two or three years before this same business man and others of his kind were rejoicing that a strong man like Lord Kitchener had been sent to Egypt to terrorise the Nationalists. No sooner had Lord Kitchener warmed to his work, scared off the turbulent Nationalists to Constantinople or Geneva, and begun to do the hustling enjoined upon the British administration of Egypt by Theodore Roosevelt, than the dormant spirit of the Briton awakens; he remembers he is a democrat, and straightway begins to object to Lord Kitchener's autocratic ways!

If, a few thousand years hence, all records of modern Egyptian history should be lost, save the sheaf of carefully culled newspaper cuttings that I hold in my hand as I write, the Flinders Petries of the future will not be much troubled to fix the actual place and functions of the noble lord whose name in British annals was earlier connected with battle and conquest. As to whether he obtained control over Egypt as a gift from his Emperor for past military services, or whether he conquered the country for himself, they may be in doubt; but they will certainly conclude that he ruled Egypt, not as any "power behind the throne,"

but as an arbitrary Eastern prince, whose word was law and whose personality dominated all others in the public eye. From the headlines alone of the English and some of the foreign and native local papers, it is impossible not to conclude that Lord Kitchener's rôle was studied and intentional. We read such headings as " Lord Kitchener's Drainage scheme," " Lord Kitchener's Land Policy," " Lord Kitchener and the Wakfs " (Religious Endowments), " Lord Kitchener and the Agricultural Syndicates "; and " Lord Kitchener's Five Feddan Law " is quoted *ad nauseam*. The Government's policy and the Khedive's ideas—if he had any—are left unchronicled.

Lord Kitchener made progresses through the country, receiving adulatory addresses, accepting petitions and promising redress like any royal prince. On one of these occasions he was presented with an effusion in which the writer—a school-teacher evidently dazzled by the limelight which continually played upon the mighty soldier—referred to him, quite unconscious of irony, as " an absolute monarch." And, indeed, it seemed sometimes to onlookers that the only difference between Lord Kitchener and that former arbitrary and unfortunate occupant of the Khedival throne, Ismail, was that Lord Kitchener had to govern within a given financial limit, whereas Ismail did not.

The petitions with which the British Agent was overwhelmed were another indication of his power. The first to petition him not having been snubbed apparently, others with grievances to be righted were emboldened to follow their example, until it had become the correct and apparently wished-for attitude towards the Agency to send petitions there instead of to responsible Ministers, with, perhaps, out of courtesy, a copy of the petition to the latter. Lord Kitchener was appealed to by the Copts to have their peculating clergy brought to book and to have their "Wakfs" (property placed in trust or religious endowments) treated in the same way as the Mohammedan institution for the same purpose—i.e. put under ministerial control. School and college students poured upon him their complaints on all subjects—though once, when their examination papers were deemed too hard, they appealed to the Khedive! Telephone employees so far forgot themselves as to petition Lord Kitchener to safeguard their rights in the coming transfer to the Government of the Cairo Telephone Service. In fact, the toady and the sycophant and the Vicars of Bray, who are found in every nation and who are the particular bane of subject nations, discovered the weakness—and the strength—of the Agency, and acted accordingly.

Lord Kitchener was, of course, credited with the gift of the new Constitution to the nation

rather than the Khedive, who had for years been the recipient of petitions on the subject from his people, and we were informed at the time (1913) that the first elections under it could not take place until his lordship was safely back in Egypt after his holiday, the papers freely stating that the date of the polling had been arranged to meet his convenience. And so completely did he usurp the part of ruler that on his return he issued a proclamation to the nation. " Lord Kitchener," it ran, " salutes the Egyptians on his return. . . . Lord Kitchener wishes that every Egyptian should know that the coming elections to the Legislative Assembly will be impartial and in conformity with justice and equity."

Perhaps, however, it was his attitude to the newly-created legislative body which most of all indicated the power of his sceptre and the subordinate position he evidently intended the new Parliament to hold. Delegates from the Co-operative movement waited on him, and we afterwards read: " If anything was needed to make Lord Kitchener the most popular man in Egypt, it was his recent promise that the first draft law that would be submitted to the approval of the Legislative Assembly should be one providing for the creation of Agricultural Syndicates in Egypt," and the paragraph was headed " Lord Kitchener's Promise Received with Joy." But it was not

enough that Lord Kitchener should settle beforehand what the new Egyptian Parliament was to legislate upon ; he did not apparently consider that the Egyptians were capable without his direction of even fitting up the Chamber in which the new Assembly was to deliberate. " In view," said one newspaper, " of the increased number of representatives, the Chamber in which the old Legislative Council deliberated was too small to accommodate the new members and the Press, and we are informed that Lord Kitchener has given orders for a total rearrangement of the hall."

With few exceptions the roads of Egypt are notoriously bad. Lord Kitchener, had the money been available, would have had the country intersected by arterial roads, which would not only have been an immense boon to the fellaheen, but would have added enormously to the prosperity of the country. I have heard it said that when he was making one of his tours in the provinces he would have a map of the district through which he was passing laid out before him, and would make marks upon it indicating where roads should be made, and sometimes would insist upon their being made, to the dismay of officials who had had money allocated for other works.

It is doubtful whether any modern ruler of Egypt, with the exception of Ismail Pasha, ever attempted to beautify Cairo as Lord Kitchener did.

My first impression of the approach to Cairo railway-station was that of a nightmare for the pedestrian and a danger for vehicular traffic—a congeries of narrow roads, with horse-trams, cabs, carts, all inextricably mixed up at dangerous crossings. It is now a fine, open space, and would do credit to any European town, as would also the road to the Citadel, with its open space round the Hussein Mosque. Those improvements were made at considerable expense by the Cairo Tanzim, the public body which, in lieu of a municipality, is responsible for the well-being of the town, and we read: " On Friday afternoon Lord Kitchener drove in his motor-car to the Manshia quarter, where he inspected the new square and the beds of green which are being planted. The whole arrangement seemed to meet with his satisfaction, and his lordship ordered that four instead of two feddans (acres) should be given up for gardens in the square, and that £E.13,900 be spent on these." The work was no sooner finished than the Press announced a scheme for the further adornment of the open spaces near the station, and an article appeared in one of the English dailies with four headlines: " Rameses Square—Lord Kitchener's Great Project—Colossi for Cairo Station—Further Cairo Improvements Contemplated." In the course of the article we were informed that " these adornments consist . . . of the two huge Colossi of

Rameses II which are at present lying at Sakhara. It is Lord Kitchener's intention that these two statues shall be erected, one in the middle of the large grass plot immediately in front of the Ezbekieh Caracol, and the other in the grass plot which is about to be made near the tramlines." This announcement of Lord Kitchener's intention to remove those two ancient landmarks from their repose under the palm-trees at Memphis stirred easy-going Cairo, and even far Constantinople raised an eyebrow. The removal would cost £10,000, and money was badly needed for further street improvements in other densely populated parts of the capital. Criticism drew out what had every appearance of an inspired article in the columns of one of the local English dailies, in which the strange argument was used that since at least £200,000 would be needed for street improvements, and since the Exchequer could not at the moment bear such a strain, the authorities would be justified in sanctioning the smaller expenditure of £10,000 on removing the statues. And it was hinted that if objection to Lord Kitchener's scheme was raised merely on the ground of expense, "the necessary cash will come from some other source which H.M. Agent, with his usual ingenuity, has succeeded in tapping."

It must be admitted that Lord Kitchener was "governing" in Egyptian affairs to good purpose.

But the question arises, what would have happened had there been no war and had he survived until now? His object, according to his own despatches to the Foreign Office, was to get the people of Egypt to take an increasing interest in their civil duties, but how would that have come about while he was the sole disposer of the political and social life of the country? How were they to be taught to think for themselves and to learn how to use democratic institutions?

He had laid the Nationalists low, but the one and only session of the Parliament he had given the Egyptians—of which Zaghlul Pasha was the Vice-President—bid fair to become, at all events, an exceedingly interesting debating school, if one can judge by the criticisms called forth by the projects Lord Kitchener caused to be laid before it. And quite possibly, if the criticisms had been constructive and not merely obstructive, their makers might have gradually been entrusted with larger powers, otherwise, we may presume, Lord Kitchener would have been constrained still to treat them as very backward pupils.

[NOTE : Part of the foregoing chapter appeared in the form of an article by the author in the *New Statesman* of February 14, 1914.]

CHAPTER IV

THE WAR INTERLUDE

WHEN war broke out Lord Kitchener was at home, and the Khedive Abbas Hilmy was on holiday at Constantinople. On August 5, 1914, Rushdy Pasha, the Prime Minister, who acted as Regent during the Khedive's absence, after a meeting of the Council of Ministers, declared Egypt to be at war with the enemies of the King of England, this being necessary in order that the occupying Power might secure the defence of Egypt. As in most European countries, a moratorium was declared and the panic among merchants caused by the outbreak of war gradually died down.

On October 18, the Legislative Assembly, which was due to meet shortly, was adjourned first for two months and then *sine die*. It made little difference, for the Assembly possessed no real powers except in regard to new taxation, and legislation continued to be enacted by decisions of the Council of Ministers and promulgated after they had received the signature of the ruler, or, in his absence, that of his representative. In order to prevent the Legislative Assembly from calling itself

together and discussing the situation, and also to keep down criticism of the actions of the Government in such critical times, a law was promulgated preventing public meetings.

In view of the expected entry of Germany into the war, and the necessity of increasing the Army of Occupation and of putting Egypt into a state of defence, Great Britain declared martial law over Egypt on November 2. On November 7 it was announced that Turkey had joined the Germans (on November 5). Britain then proclaimed her intention of taking upon herself the sole responsibility of defending Egypt without asking for Egypt's help, though Egyptian artillery were immediately sent to the defence of the Suez Canal.

On December 18 Britain declared a Protectorate over Egypt, and the suzerainty of Turkey was abolished. The next day the Khedive Abbas Hilmy, who had not returned to Egypt, was deposed owing to his alleged adherence to the enemy, and Prince Hussein, his uncle, the eldest representative of the descendants of Mohammed Ali, who was the founder of the dynasty, took the Khedive's place, with the title of Sultan of Egypt.

After the shock of the outbreak of war nothing that happened seemed to surprise anyone, and Egypt took the change of ruler remarkably quietly. The Sultan was known and respected as a man of

integrity, and his interest in the welfare of his tenants—for he was an agriculturist on a large scale—had earned him the title of “The Father of the Fellaheen.” The anti-British element showed itself, however, in two attempts to assassinate him the following year, and the Prime Minister narrowly escaped with his life shortly afterwards. Sultan Hussein died in 1917 and was succeeded by his brother, Prince Ahmed Fuad, now King of Egypt.

The first effect of the war was that many people were thrown out of work, and for the first time during the British occupation men were parading the streets demanding bread. Relief works were started, the local authorities paying what they considered a living wage for the unskilled labourer, namely, it is interesting to note, P.T. 3 a day for a man's, P.T. 2 for a woman's, and P.T. 1 for a child's labour— $7\frac{1}{2}d.$, $5d.$, and $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ respectively, and, though a navvy could easily eat three piastres' worth of bread a day, there were no complaints that the wage was inadequate. Owing to the absence of demand for cotton, the cultivators were almost ruined, but taxes nevertheless had to be collected. One method of securing payment was to persuade the fellaheen to borrow the jewellery of their womenfolk, special arrangements being made by the Assay Office for its fair conversion into money. Soon there was plenty of work for all and good wages. In a short time the country was turned

into a vast base for military operations, not only in connection with the defence of the Canal, but for the prosecution of the war in Gallipoli, and later in Palestine and Syria. Egypt was now fairly in the war, but its realities were forced upon the people, not by any fighting in their midst—they never even realised any danger when the Canal was attacked—but by the arrival of thousands of wounded immediately after the landing on Gallipoli on April 25, 1915. Hospitals were everywhere improvised, Egyptian schools were hired, and huge hotels were rented, and from that time until the end of the war, and for months after, Egypt was thronged with British and Overseas wounded and convalescents. Division after division disembarked and embarked again; at one time, it was said, there were a million of our soldiers in the country. British residents took it all as a matter of course, and bent their energies to render what help they could to their kith and kin. But it must all have seemed very strange to the Egyptians. They were not in the least interested in the war. They would doubtless have sided with the Germans had the choice been given them, for no other reason than that Germany did not happen to be the occupying Power. The fact that they were technically at war with Turkey did not move them much, as Egyptians have no love for the Turks, while the presence of thousands of troops with money to

spend did much to soften the attitude of the small traders in the towns towards the foreign soldiery.

Martial law, which was concurrent with, and did not supersede, the jurisdiction of the civil tribunals, did not press heavily upon those people who went about their proper business, but it made the way of transgressors doubly hard, as it was intended it should. Proclamations under martial law literally filled volumes, and so difficult was it to keep track of them that they were issued in monthly parts for a small sum, and could be had bound at the end of the year like a popular magazine. In many ways martial law was helpful to the Egyptians. It dealt, for one thing, with the liquor traffic, which was a scandal. It could not be tackled adequately by the Egyptian authorities because most of it was in the hands of foreigners who were protected by the Capitulations. The most poisonous liquids were being manufactured—some upon analysis proving to contain sewage—and dispensed by foreign distillers to our soldiers as genuine brands. There were, of course, by-laws or arrêtés, as they are called in Egypt, regulating the sale of drink, but since the Egyptian police could not raid a bar without a Consular order, and as by the time that order was obtained the vendor had usually got wind of the coming visit and was prepared for it, few offenders were caught, and

when they were their punishment was entirely inadequate. Although the proclamations stringently regulating the drink traffic were primarily intended to protect the soldiers' health, they were also of no little benefit to the Egyptians, who, though naturally a sober people—for Moslems are not supposed to touch alcohol—have exhibited for some years an alarming tendency to cultivate the drinking habit. Another boon conferred, though late in the day, by martial law was the provision of a Rent Restrictions Act. To have made it applicable to Egyptians only would have been unfair, yet under the Capitulations such a law could not have been applied to the host of foreign landlords without the consent of the Capitulatory Powers, and to wait for that would have been tantamount to deferring the matter to the Greek Kalends. Therefore, after much agitation consequent upon a great deal of suffering and hardship inflicted by the extortionate owners of house property, the Rent Law was promulgated after a proclamation by Lord Allenby. The Capitulations were overridden by martial law in another, though smaller, matter, with an equally wholesome result as far as Egyptians were concerned, namely, by the imposition of the ghaffir or night-watchmen's tax upon Europeans as well as upon Egyptians. It relieved Egyptians from carrying alone the burden of paying for the night police force, by

whose services foreigners benefited equally with themselves.

It is no part of my intention to deal with the state of Egypt during the war. From the journalist's point of view the period involving the horrors of the censorship is worth a volume to itself. From the point of view of the military the period has already been admirably dealt with by Colonel Elgood in his book, *The Army in Egypt*. As far as the growth of Egyptian Nationalism is concerned, the war formed an interval during which what was left of the second phase of Egyptian Nationalism disappeared entirely, and the seed of the new Nationalism, which was to prove itself of a far stronger and sturdier type than that of either Arabi or Kamel, was quietly and resolutely germinating underground.

CHAPTER V

THE NEW NATIONALISM

THE new Nationalism sprang into being almost in a night. Its leader, Saad Zaghlul Pasha, had been successively Minister of Education and of Justice, and in 1914 was by far the most impressive figure in the new Legislative Assembly formed under the Constitution of 1913—Lord Kitchener's gift. During the one and only session of the Assembly Zaghlul showed his oratorical powers, his defiant attitude, and also other curious traits, among which is a mixture of changeableness and obstinacy. He was not then popular, but he was considered a strong man, and he was probably the only man in Egypt with whom Lord Kitchener might have had serious trouble had the sittings of the Assembly continued. But the war came, and Zaghlul and every other politician disappeared from the horizon, hidden by the heavy cloud of the Press Censorship.

Early in the war I had a long interview with Saad Pasha Zaghlul at Ramleh, a suburb of Alexandria, the Cairenes' summer resort. I could not help feeling a certain amount of admiration

for a man who, in middle life, had with difficulty acquired the French language and taken a law degree in France, but I missed in him the disarming geniality of so many staunch Nationalists, and I felt sorry for the bitter, disappointed old man. No one would have dreamed then that his star, far from setting, had scarcely appeared above the horizon.

During the war no Nationalist propaganda of any sort was allowed—the Press Censorship saw to that—but as the hostilities dragged on every Egyptian journalist wallowed in the copy doled out gratuitously by the authorities on the beauties of self-determination and the joyous future held up before subject races once the Allies had won the war. Undesirable persons were weeded out by the secret police and put under lock and key. The Legislative Assembly, as already noted, was in a state of animated suspension, the only tangible sign of its existence being that the members regularly received their salaries. Its meetings would have been a useless hindrance to legislation, it was supposed, with the country in a state of siege, and in order to prevent irregular conclaves being held the Law of Assembly forbade more than five persons meeting together. We only got occasional glimpses of what was going on subterraneously among the Egyptian students. Such an opportunity was given by the trial in 1916 of two young men accused and

found guilty of attempting to assassinate Sultan Hussein at Alexandria by bombs, when considerable light was thrown on the work of the Egyptian Secret Police, and the fact came out that hundreds of people were in prison on suspicion only.

As soon as the Armistice was signed Saad Zaghlul Pasha and several influential Egyptians called privately on Sir Reginald Wingate, the High Commissioner, and informed him that, the war being over, they desired to go to London to discuss with representatives of the British Government the future status of Egypt. General Wingate could, of course, give no reply, except that he would forward their request to London. It was not known that the High Commissioner went further, and recommended that the Government should receive the deputation. But an amazing madness seemed just then to seize our authorities at home in regard to Egypt. No one knows what was going on in the minds of the members of the British Government, but a perusal of the correspondence which took place between Zaghlul Pasha and the Residency, and of Zaghlul's letters to Mr. Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, President Wilson, M. Clemenceau, and to the foreigners resident in Egypt, a few copies of which were circulated secretly, makes one feel that the Coalition Government by its attitude did not merely make mistakes, but committed crimes against its own nationhood,

against its own spiritual light—crimes which have had since to be expiated, not only by loss of blood and loss of dignity on the British side, but have had a disastrous effect on the Egyptians' none too well-balanced mentality.

Had the Egyptians been allowed to plead their cause at the Peace Conference—their next objective after the London refusal—side by side with the representatives of smaller nations who were admitted, but who had far less claim to attention, inasmuch as many of them did not know the meaning in practice of autonomy, the Egyptians would speedily have found their level, and would have emerged from that experience, even if they had been granted then and there a measure of independence, far less inclined to ape Imperialists than they are at present, for they would have discovered that they were but small fry among small fry. It is no wonder that, their natural characteristic not being modesty, since 1922 they have been bursting with pride and self-esteem. They have stood up alone to the greatest Imperial Power of the world, and, after hundreds of years of dependency, their country has become an independent kingdom. It is true they have relied upon the most detestable of weapons—political assassination—as their chief means of aggression, but it has been terribly effective. It will, of course, recoil upon the users' own heads later on, and may even lead

once more to their political annihilation, for the civilised peoples of the world cannot be expected to allow a small nation to continue to indulge in orgies of assassination of foreigners. But the Egyptians can be exonerated in part, though not wholly, for their childish criminality on account of their state of partial civilisation; but Great Britain's sin against its own inner light in its treatment of Egypt at the close of hostilities is a much harder sin to forgive. The British Government had endorsed the Covenant of the League of Nations, had preached through the Press in Egypt the gospel of self-determination, and was willing to have this theory put into practice in other cases, but not in that of Egypt.

This act of folly of the Coalition Government at the end of the war neutralised, as far as the Egyptians were concerned, the admittedly fine work done for Egypt by Britain, since 1882. And we have not seen the full consequences of that act. It is not to be supposed that the Egyptians will now remain content with less than complete independence, even if it were wiser that they should. Yet if they persist in behaving, when making their demands, as if they were a first-class Power, and if, in addition, their political leaders continue tacitly to approve of political murder, they run a great risk of losing all they have gained.

Nothing satisfactory having come of Zaghlul's

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interview with Sir R. Wingate, and having had no response to his request to the military authorities for a passport to London, Zaghlul wrote urging the High Commissioner to use his influence with the latter to obtain a passport for himself and the Egyptian delegation (in Arabic, wafd) as it was important he should be in London before the end of December, the reason being, of course, that he wished to confer with the British authorities before the Peace Conference should meet. To this request he received the following from the private secretary of the High Commissioner, dated December 1, 1918:

"I am directed by His Excellency the High Commissioner to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 29th ultimo, and to inform you, in reply, that, after reference to His Majesty's Government, His Excellency feels unable to make any representations to the military authorities in the matter.

"I am to add that, should you desire to submit suggestions as to the Government of Egypt not being inconsistent with the policy of His Majesty's Government, as already declared, such suggestions can most conveniently be submitted in writing to His Excellency. In this connection I may draw your attention to the Communication¹ addressed by Sir Milne Cheetham, by instruction

¹ See Note, page 328.

of His Majesty's Government, to the late Sultan Hussein on the occasion of His Accession."

While these letters were passing between Zaghlul and the Residency the towns and villages had been circulated with lists of the members of the delegation or wafd, which was to accompany Zaghlul to London, together with a form to be signed by the electors signifying their approval, and giving these men a mandate to act for Egypt. The authorities seized as many of the forms as they could, but already thousands had been signed and had reached the hands of the Nationalist leaders. Zaghlul's reply, dated December 3, to the communication from the Residency was in French, as had been his other letters, and was couched in very dignified, straightforward terms. He told Sir Reginald Wingate that it was not permissible for him or for any member of the delegation to make suggestions that were not in conformity with the wishes of the nation expressed in its mandate to the delegation—a mandate signed by the élite of the nation, comprising the members of the Legislative Assembly, which would have had as well the signatures of the electors had not the authorities confiscated the forms. He explained the object of his visit to England—to meet the representatives of the nation and those who direct public opinion, knowing that the success of their mission would depend upon the spirit of

justice, liberty, and the safeguarding of the interests of the weak which characterised British public opinion. Obviously, then, a simple communication would not be sufficient, and he declared himself unable to believe that the refusal to permit him and the delegation to go to London fitted in with the principles of liberty and justice which, through the victory of Britain and her allies, had opened avenues for the good of humanity and the redemption of the peoples. This reply showed how the Egyptians had profited by the copy freely distributed to the newspapers by G.H.Q. and the Press Bureau on self-determination and the objects of the Allies.

Zaghlul addressed the next day a letter of protest to Mr. Lloyd George personally, appealing to his sense of fair play. Letters were also sent to members of the Peace Conference, and urgent telegrams to Mr. Lloyd George and President Wilson.

Meanwhile the general public in Egypt were largely in the dark as to what was happening. The departure of the Prime Minister, Rushdy Pasha, Adly Yeghen Pasha, Minister of Education and the acting Financial Adviser, Sir William Brunyate, for London on important business in connection with the future of Egypt had been announced in the Press and later contradicted. Rumours were current that the Prime Minister had resigned, but nothing to this effect was allowed to appear in

the papers, nor must it be imagined that anything could be published concerning Zaghlul's repeated efforts to get permission to go to London.

On December 30 Rushdy addressed a plea to the Sultan to accept his resignation, but it was not until some time afterwards that we learned that while Zaghlul had been told no useful purpose would be served by his going to London to discuss Egyptian affairs, Rushdy and his colleague had been asked to "postpone the visit he was projecting." All this time fuel was being added to the fire of Zaghlul's resentment by seeing the names announced of envoys of the various nationalities to be represented at the Peace Conference, or to be allowed to be there to express their views. Among them were the names of the Emir Faisal, son of the Sherif of Mecca who, after having declared his independence of Turkey, had helped beat his former overlord and was now enjoying a subsidy from Britain. Emissaries from Cyprus and Syria were also to be welcomed, while Egypt, who had borne so much during the war and had remained docile and uncomplaining under all its difficulties and hardships, whose sons had done much to help defeat the Turk by their work in the Labour Corps, and who was far more advanced in civilisation than any of these countries—Egypt was refused a hearing. It was the last straw.

Zaghlul made an inspiring oration in Cairo early

in January which set the pace. Underground anti-British propaganda became fast and furious. Literature was scattered broadcast from secret printing-presses. The Cabinet was still in a state of semi-dissolution. Sir Reginald Wingate was sent for by the British Government to explain the position. On March 6 General Watson, commanding the troops in Egypt, called Zaghlul and nine of his associates to an interview, and warned them that the agitation they were conducting was a criminal act directed against the established order, and bade them under martial law cease their propaganda. One or two of the Nationalists wished to reply to the General, but he merely wished them good-bye.

The following day the delegation published a report of the proceedings and a protest. This was taken to be open defiance, and two days later, upon instructions from London, the acting High Commissioner, Sir Milne Cheetham, ordered the arrest of Zaghlul and three of his closest associates—Mohammed Madmoud Pasha, Ismail Sidky Pasha, and Hamid el Bassil Pasha. They were deported on a warship to Malta. The resurrection of Nationalism in a newer, more vigorous form than it had ever known before, was an accomplished thing.

CHAPTER VI

THE 1919 RISING

IN the beginning of March 1919 the world was astonished to hear that a rising or a revolt had taken place in Egypt. Whatever it was that had happened, the cosmopolitan inhabitants of the great towns of Cairo and Alexandria were as unprepared for it as the rest of the world. The rising, outburst, revolt, rebellion, revolution—each word was used according to the nationality or temperament of the speaker—came as a bolt from the blue upon the general public in Egypt, for so strict had been the censorship of the Press that no hint of any serious trouble had been allowed to escape. We wondered what versions of the events were reaching home. No comments on the resignation of the Prime Minister had been allowed to appear. Now and then a paragraph would state that it was “expected that a new ministry would soon be formed” or that “Rushdy Pasha had decided to continue at his post,” and so it went on for weeks. Meanwhile, speculation was rife as to the cause of the resignation. And after the crash had come, no one except those intimately connected with either

the Government or the leaders of the Nationalist movement themselves could give an account of why Egypt should be prostrate after her recent convulsions. The former, it is to be presumed, would not, and the latter could not, speak, and it was left to the simple man to suppose that, as usual, someone had blundered.

The attitude of the Government towards the Press was one of the severest repression. A British journalist wrote to the Chief Press Censor on March 11: "The Press is not being fairly dealt with in connection with the troubles of the Government. No one believes the official versions of what took place in Cairo yesterday, nor has there been the slightest hint in the papers to prepare the public for what has happened, and the impression among all intelligent people is that the British Administration here has grossly blundered, in that it has allowed things to come to such a pass in a country which is so easily governed as Egypt. Since we journalists are not vouchsafed—even for our private information and to guide us in our attitude towards current events—any authentic information from official sources, we are driven to form our opinion upon what we hear in the way of current gossip. Why have we not been informed of the true reason for withdrawing the permission originally given to Rushdy Pasha to go to Europe? It was allowed to be announced in the Press that he was going,

and it is since the alteration in his plans that he resigned and that it has been impossible to form a new ministry. There may have seemed good reason to the authorities for preventing Egyptians going to England (though it is impossible to imagine any really valid ones), but surely, in view of what has happened, those who prevented their going were ill-advised. To the ordinary man in the street it would seem but common sense to let these Ministers go and ventilate their grievances, and thus prevent an explosion. But apparently the authorities have preferred to risk an explosion, and they have got it ! It does not speak well for their acumen or their knowledge of human psychology."

Although the attitude demanded from us by the censors was that of Oriental servility, we occasionally relieved our feelings by despatches of this kind.

On March 27 the Egyptian papers contained the first intimation of the way in which the news had been received at home. Reuter's telegrams gave a summary of a speech on the situation delivered by Lord Curzon in the House of Lords on March 24. From it we gathered that Rushdy Pasha and Adly Yeghen Pasha had been asked merely to "postpone" their visit to England, and that their presence there "would be most welcome," and then, according to the telegram, the noble lord went on to say, "But as regards Saad Zaghlul Pasha and the persons who have organised this present

movement, it is a different matter. They are the self-appointed and irresponsible leaders of agitation for the avowed purpose of expelling the British from Egypt."

British and other foreign residents alike felt unutterable things when they read this amazing expression of ignorance. It seemed impossible to believe that Lord Curzon had not been better posted about affairs in Egypt. Somehow or other, the Foreign Office has always refused to try to understand the Egyptian situation. Lord Cromer found it so, and in *Modern Egypt* he makes no secret of the difficulties and annoyances and even tragedies it caused. In this case the refusal to take the advice of Sir Reginald Wingate (who is credited with having made an effort lasting some months to make our rulers, who had declared a Protectorate over Egypt, understand what was happening in that Protectorate) led to woeful tragedies, the end of which we have not yet seen.

Presumably Lord Curzon later became better informed about Saad Zaghlul and "the persons" who organised the new Nationalist movement. The men who formed the delegation which it was desired to send to England were all men of standing; some of whom had held portfolios in the Cabinet preceding the Rushdy Cabinet, which remained in a state of semi-dissolution for several months. Taking only the four pashas who were

arrested, whose arrest and deportation to Malta was the signal for demonstrations which preceded the murders and general destruction of public and private property of March 11, we find Saad Zaghlul, the head of the proposed deputation, held the position of Vice-President of the Legislative Assembly (which had not been allowed to meet since the war broke out), and was formerly Minister of Justice and Education ; Ismail Sidky Pasha had had a very active ministerial career, and was appointed President of the Commission on Commerce and Industry which produced in 1918 a most useful and exhaustive report on local industries ; Mohammed Madmoud Pasha, who was educated at Oxford, where he took history honours, was for a time Governor of Behera Province ; while the fourth of these deportees was Hamed-el-Bassil, member of the Legislative Assembly for the Fayoum Province. If these men were irresponsible, how is it that the British administration had ever allowed them to be placed in such responsible posts ? As for their being self-appointed, the people were not allowed the chance of electing them, for the papers sent out by Zaghlul and the delegation to the electorate were confiscated. This gives the keynote of the whole unhappy situation, and largely explains how it came about that the revolt of the Egyptians was not sporadic or half-hearted, but went throughout the whole length and breadth of

the land, and showed a desperate purpose and determined organisation. Practically the whole of the railway communications in Egypt were paralysed for several days, and the telegraph wires were cut. We seemed to have gone back to mediæval times in more ways than one. The most ferocious murders of British officials and ordinary civilians took place, particularly horrible being the massacre of a group of soldiers returning from leave in a railway-carriage in Upper Egypt, their bodies being rendered completely unrecognisable by the fury of the mob.

Those who are accustomed to travel in Egypt and enjoy there all the emenities and luxuries of civilisation, as well as the general courtesy of the people, can hardly imagine the state of things in the country during the whole of March, and even part of April. In many of the provincial towns British families, among them being men and women born in the country and on the friendliest terms with the Egyptians, were obliged to leave their homes and take shelter all together in rest-houses, or other buildings, guarded by their men friends with revolvers, until troops could be allocated to their district, enabling order to be sufficiently restored for them to return to their houses. The large Armenian population of Cairo went out *en bloc* to a camp, while Jews and others bought tarboushes wholesale and wore them in the hope

of escaping the xenophobe fury of their native fellow-townsmen. The Egypt we had known and loved suddenly seemed to change towards us, and became filled with ungovernable hatred.

It was a painful period to live through, and to add to our pain we had to bear the taunts of the other foreign residents, who were scathing in their criticisms of the British authorities, first for having allowed such a state of things to occur, and then for their "softness" in their subsequent treatment of Zaghlul Pasha and his fellow-deportees. The attitude of the foreign nationalities in Egypt was that the premier place Great Britain arrogated to herself was tolerable so long as British troops made Egypt safe for foreign business men and luxury-loving Levantines. When Britain allowed an upheaval to take place it was time to hand the job to someone else. When Lord Allenby arrived, and began a policy of pacification by ordering the release of the four pashas from Malta, the foreign element felt themselves completely outraged, because their safety, they considered, became still more imperilled, and many of our own countrymen hung their heads with shame at that apparently hopeless sign of weak-kneed concession to the mob, though others saw in it the only action possible for a magnanimous nation, and felt that Britain's representative was right. The experience of those days taught me one thing: I, who had only known

an orderly, well-conducted Egypt, had always been at a loss to understand the sudden qualms which from time to time would seize certain of my fellow-countrymen who feared a "rising." These remembered the events of June 1882, which to most of us were matters of historical interest only. After March 1919 and May 1921 I could at least understand the memories which prompted their fears of an anti-foreign outbreak, particularly among the people of Alexandria, who, in their time, whether as pagans, Christians, or Moslems, have committed more revolting crimes under the tyranny of mob passion than perhaps any other city in the world.

CHAPTER VII

THE FELLAHEEN AND THE BRITISH

THE fellah is the man, irrespective of class, who cultivates the land. Arabi Pasha was a fellah; Zaghlul Pasha also claims to be one. The late Sultan Hussein was called "The Father of the Fellaheen." A fellah may be a farmer or only a farm labourer. He may own but a portion of an acre or many acres, or he may own nothing but the labour he gives in return for the means of eking out an existence that would be intolerable in any but a sun-filled land. Nine-tenths of the people of Egypt live on the land, and they have no desire to live apart from it. There is practically no drift from the country to the towns. But the big land-owners, some of them highly educated, who live mostly in Cairo, travel in Europe, and pay only occasional visits to their country seats, are a class apart. Generally speaking, therefore, when we refer to the fellaheen we mean the cultivators as distinguished from the townsmen and the intelligentsia of Egypt. It is as well to bear the distinction in mind, for these two sections of the people of Egypt have had in the past very little

in common, and the future of Egypt will depend upon how the governing classes handle the fellaheen.

The fellah's outlook on life is entirely bounded by his own personal affairs. He has no conception of the size of the world or of the relative importance of his own country. He was the first to benefit by British administration, and of all the British officials the Irrigation Inspector has come nearest to his life. He discovered very quickly after 1882 that water was impartially distributed when the "Mufettish Ingeezi" (English inspector) took control, and though by nature suspicious of strangers, so long as he could feel that the foreigner served his interests he would have accepted British rule indefinitely. There was, of course, latent hostility in his nature to the stranger, and it is not surprising. A glance at the history of Egypt, with its never-ending succession of foreign rulers, each and all of whom regarded the cultivator as their lawful prey, explains the xenophobe "complex" of the people. But British rule had done much for the fellaheen, so that before the war, when the Nationalists, under Kamel Pasha, were busy with their agitation in Cairo and in Europe, their propaganda scarcely touched the fellaheen. These had, in truth, much to make them contented. Not only were rich and poor obtaining a fair distribution of water, but they were having a great deal more justice meted out to them in every direction than any of their

ancestors had ever imagined possible on this earth ; a cessation of courbash rule ; an end of forced labour¹ ; and the foundations were at last being laid for the only kind of education that could possibly benefit them in the form of technical schools. Strangers came and saw for themselves the changes for the better that had been wrought by the establishment of good order in Egypt. But the war overthrew our complacency in our achievements, as it did the fellah's good opinion of us.

Up to the spring of 1919, the average British resident in Egypt was apt to dismiss the Nationalist movement with the statement that it represented only a very small section, consisting of certain of the pashas belonging to the old governing class and some of the younger generation who had become educated and had got hold of the theory of European democratic government, which made the basis for very eloquent speeches. The Briton in Egypt and politicians at home would speak exultingly of the fact that the mass of the people—the fellaheen—were content with British administration, and did not share the ambitions of the agitators, for the British had swept away the chief grievances which fill the pages of the history of the old autocratic system of government, brought

¹ The *corvée*, or system of forced labour for dredging canals, abolished in 1892.

up to the point of excruciation during the time of Ismail Pasha. Whatever the Egyptian politician may have felt about British control, whatever his dreams of independence may have been, he, too, knew in his heart that the fellah was content to let well alone.

The surprise of the 1919 rising, therefore, consisted in the fact that it was by no means confined to the townsmen and the educated or semi-educated classes; that a widespread antipathy to British rule had taken possession of the very class we were proud to say were "with us to a man," and the hostility and criminal attitude of the peasants towards their foreign rulers came as a tremendous shock.

What had happened to the patient, toiling Nilot who, through all the changes which his country had witnessed since the dawn of history, had himself remained practically unchanged, and whose power of survival under the cruellest physical hardships is unknown elsewhere in the world? What could have made him rise up in his wrath and commit crimes which in calmer moments he would deprecate, since much of the destruction he wrought turned out to be more harmful to himself than to anyone else?

Many chapters might be written on the special grievances of the fellaheen, but they may be summed up in a few words. They amounted in actuality

to nothing less than an apparent return to the old tyrannies from which, since 1882, the British had been able to boast they had emancipated Egypt.

We know now how the army, as the war progressed, made greater and greater demands upon Egypt for food, labour, transport animals, and forage. But it must not be imagined that the British, whether in civil or military command, suddenly lost all sense of decency, and began to treat the people of Egypt as they had been treated by the Mamelukes or by Mohammed Ali or Ismail. The process by which the Egyptian farmer was made to shoulder the burden of helping to win the war in Palestine, and save his own country from invasion was a gradual one. But what is now well known to every student of the Egyptian question was only by degrees understood by those of us who were in Egypt in 1919. We had to discover it for ourselves, the Press being forcibly silent on the origin of the rising.

Detailed descriptions of the fellah's state of mind were given me during the summer of 1919 by a bey, himself a farmer, who had had, like the rest of the agricultural population, to meet the demands made upon him. "But you see," he would say, with a bland smile, "I was a friend of the Omdeh, and therefore was often let off more lightly than one who had not that good fortune!"

This is the substance of his explanation of the

fellah's new attitude towards his former benefactors: during the war the army was in need of many things, and the Government had to requisition them. For example, the order was given that for each feddan (acre) of land the owner had to supply one ardeb (nearly $5\frac{1}{2}$ bushels) of durra (maize.) The Government paid, say, P.T. 180 (about £1 17s.) for it. Now under the Supplies Control Board the selling price of most articles was fixed, but that did not prevent the most notorious contravention of the tariff, so that at the very time that the Government commandeered grain at P.T. 180, the fellah in the market secretly could get P.T. 240 for it. The peasant, therefore, saw in this fixing of a tariff, not a desire on the part of the Government to check profiteering, but to secure produce for its own purposes at far less than the market value. But, being Orientals, the fact that the Government commandeered produce would not in itself be sufficient to rouse the wrath of the peasants. (My friend, the bey, was always emphatic about this.) But the Government carried on its requisitioning through the *native officials*, who were not slow to take advantage of such an opportunity for securing benefits for themselves. The chief representative of the Government in a village is called an Omdeh, and the history of village government is that of Oriental government generally in miniature. The Omdeh is a despot—sometimes

almost a benevolent, more often a tyrannical, despot, but always a despot. The Omdeh would not infrequently call for two ardebs from a farmer where the Government asked for one. The Government price would be duly paid ; one ardeb would be punctiliously handed over by the Omdeh to the authorities, and with the other he would send his servant to the market, where he would get at least double the amount he had paid the fellah. And the same thing happened with every sort of produce. Efforts were made by the authorities to secure at least that the money paid out reached the proper hands, but, in view of what was being done, it can be easily seen that the fellah was labouring under the sort of grievance a farmer could least tolerate—the knowledge that in the market he could obtain double the price he received from the Government.

Then, again, there was the question of securing “volunteers” for the Labour Corps. No one at the time could understand for what reason, when the military authorities found that native labour was a necessity for the defence of Egypt and the conquest of Palestine (as undoubtedly it was), they did not simply apply the Egyptian conscription regulations, which every year are put in force to raise recruits for the Egyptian army. Instead, promises were made that if Egyptians joined the Labour Corps and served a year they would be

let off further liability to conscription in their own army. It should be explained that £20 will secure exemption from military service, by which it will be seen that the upper classes—the effendis and the well-to-do fellaheen—invariably get off, and only the poor are taken. Even the chance of being exempt from further conscription did not appeal to the peasant, for, he argued, there was just a chance that, the number of men wanted each year for the army being limited, he might after all not be called ; neither did good wages—and very good wages were offered—bring the fellaheen out in sufficient numbers. Something had to be done. The Omdehs were told they *must* provide so many “volunteers.” Here again they made use of their position of authority to reap another golden harvest, to pay off old scores against their enemies, and generally to render the lives of the villagers bitter and hard. Heart-rending scenes were enacted through the ruthlessness of Omdehs and Mamurs (heads of police-stations), who called up and sent to the Labour Corps anyone against whom they had a grudge or those who did not produce sufficient “baksheesh.” Many cases were described to me—one was that of an old man who, with the help of his two sons, managed with the utmost difficulty to cultivate his little patch of land and provide for his family. He begged and implored for one son to be left, but in vain. Finally,

broken-hearted, he died, and of course the Omdeh somehow became possessed of his land.

In the compounds of the local police-stations a stranger would be surprised at times to see families of women and children huddled together on the ground surrounded by every item of their household goods—pots, pans, and mattresses.

Their men folk had been called up for the *Sulta*, as the Labour Corps was called, but were nowhere to be found. The police, therefore, had the women and children driven out of their homes and brought with all their impedimenta to the police-station, there to remain until, in desperation, a woman would whisper to a messenger, who would disappear and presently bring the men out of their hiding-places. The women would then be set free, while the men would be enrolled in the Labour Corps.

I have stated that good wages were paid, and it must also be admitted that there were men who, having served their term, voluntarily took service again and again. But these were mostly men of no fixed occupation, and without land. The average fellah detests leaving his home, and, besides, the men of suitable age had been brought up under the British régime, which had given the fellaheen an appreciation of their own worth, and they were not accustomed, as their fathers had been, to submit to forced labour. Moreover, although no statistics were published, the mortality, owing to

the bad conditions under which the men lived, particularly in Palestine, in a colder climate than their own, was very high. The hospitals were insufficient and very rough. On one occasion, some particulars of these hospitals having reached my ears, I asked the censor if they could be published. Of course no permission was given, but he informed me that the actual facts were even worse than I knew of! Here, again, it is doubtful if the conditions under which the men lived and died would, in themselves, have caused the fellaheen so much resentment. These things would have been the will of Allah, and there would have been an end of it. It was rather the temporary reversion to the old methods of tyranny by their own officials, from which they had been emancipated, which caused such burning resentment in their hearts against the Hakuma (the Government).^{*}

In the matter of the surrendering of arms, another injustice was done to the fellah. In the towns there certainly is no excuse for the carrying of arms by the ordinary citizen, but the provinces are by no means solely inhabited by peaceful law-abiding persons, even in ordinary times of peace. Bands of marauders infest certain districts, and the cultivation has everywhere to be guarded by ghaffirs, or armed watchmen. The poorer man is his own ghaffir, and has his old rifle or pistol always in

^{*} See page 330.

readiness. When, under martial law, no Egyptian was allowed to have arms under penalty of death, great hardships were inflicted upon many honest fellaheen. The native officials again had it all their own way. Cases of concealing arms were trumped up against personal enemies by the Mamur or Omdeh, and quite respectable men were haled before the judge. One head of a family in a good position whom I knew was very nearly executed through a plot on the part of some enemies who coveted a piece of land he had recently bought. They reported that he had hidden arms in his possession. Search was made and, sure enough, an ancient firearm, the existence of which he had forgotten, was found on his premises. He was actually condemned to death by a tribunal under martial law, but was finally saved when his innocence was established through the intervention of highly placed persons.

At a certain period of the war the columns of all the newspapers in Egypt were laden daily with long lists of names of donors, of all classes of the population, to the Red Cross Funds. The length of the list was impressive, and included every town and village in the country. It was surprising and gratifying to note how generously and spontaneously the Egyptian people were assisting Britain in the great humanitarian work of lessening the horrors of war for her sons. But never did the printed

page more successfully hide the truth than it did in those lists betokening the generosity of the fellaheen. The Sultan Hussein had given a generous send-off to the fund, and let it be understood that it was his good pleasure that Egyptians should follow his example, and the method employed to obtain subscriptions was, on the surface, perfectly proper. A circular from the Government to the governors of provinces set forth the object of the collection, and explained that the Sultan himself had started this fund, and that it was the duty of every Egyptian to give his share. In Britain we are accustomed to be bombarded with appeals for charities from the pulpit, the platform, the street pavement, and through the post. Not so the Egyptians. Appeals for funds for such purposes as the founding of a University, the Red Crescent Society, and a few private charities such as the Mohammed Ali Charity, were known in Egypt, and were responded to by the wealthy and also by certain seekers after publicity. But the collection of small and large sums from all classes of the population is not an Egyptian—or, indeed, an Oriental—custom. In order, therefore, to raise a sum for the Red Cross that would seem at all adequate, the governors of provinces brought pressure in their own way to bear upon their subordinates, who made a sort of levy upon the people by threatening dire results at the hands of the

Hakuma (the Government) if a certain sum was not raised from that particular district. How much of what was raised went into the pockets of the local officials will never be known, but the amount actually passed into the coffers of the Red Cross Society was £600,000! Later, when the Red Cross stores in Egypt were distributed, a certain amount was passed over to Egyptian hospitals—the least that could be done to make up for the manner in which Egypt had been made to contribute to the fund. Camels and donkeys were also commandeered, and, though moderately fair prices were paid by the army, the hardship of parting with animals fell, as in other matters, chiefly on those least able to afford to do without them.

The British cannot be held responsible for this, the reader will say. These frauds were the acts of the Egyptians themselves. That is not the way the fellah—who, though ignorant, is shrewd enough in matters relating to his personal well-being—saw it. His argument ran: "What is the use of having the British to rule the country if they cannot control the officials? The officials who are sons of Egypt are but the instrument of the Hakuma, and the Hakuma is in the hands of the British. If the instrument inflicts harm, that is not the fault of the instrument, but of those who handle it." The fellah does not altogether blame the Omdeh for taking advantage of his position; it is

only human, he argues, that he should do so ; the superior power that gives the Omdeh his chance is to be blamed. And thus it came about that it was Government property—railways, rest-houses, etc.—that suffered most in the fit of wanton destructiveness that seized the fellaheen while their more educated fellow-countrymen were holding demonstrations and organising huge processions in the towns.

The fellah's attitude is perfectly comprehensible, and it was a very bitter pill for the British to have to swallow when they heard it said : " The days of Ismail have come back again." In one very important sense, however, the tyranny differed from that of the days of Ismail. During the war and the succeeding years of high prices the fellah earned more hard cash than he had ever dreamed of in his life, but in spite of the fact that he was obtaining more for his produce than he had ever obtained before, the knowledge that he could have got yet more had he not been restrained by the tariffs and cheated by his superiors was gall and bitterness.

Naturally the political agitators in Cairo were not slow to take advantage of disaffection on the part of the peasants, and, though nothing could be done through the censored Press to raise a rebellion, much could be done by students in their holidays and by emissaries sent down to the larger

centres of population in the Delta and to the Upper Egyptian towns, Tales were told of the defeat of the British Army at the hands of the Turk, and, in spite of the fact that at the end of the war they knew that Zaghlul and others wished to go to England and Paris to lay their case before the victorious Allies at the Peace Conference, it was not believed by many that the Germans and the Turks, had really been beaten. One reason for this perhaps, was the tameness of the rejoicings among the Allies in Egypt when the Germans were finally defeated—the excitement among the British in Alexandria taking the form of a New Year's card, with a picture of General Allenby and views of the town, given by the British community to the troops through their unit commanders. In Cairo they did a little better.

The blame for the evil must be laid at the door of the British Administration. The fellah could not reason about the exigencies of wartime. The mass of the Egyptians were not in the least interested in the progress of the fighting. In abnormal times the Administration entrusted the carrying out of abnormal demands on the people to officials whom it considered even in normal times to be incapable of carrying out normal demands without close supervision by British inspectors. It is quite true the Administration was severely handicapped by the absence of many of

its best British officials on active service. Most of them had departed before any of the extraordinary measures referred to above had to be taken. Nevertheless, what strikes even the most benevolent critic is the complete lack of foresight or of able planning to meet contingencies that characterised the British Administration of Egypt during the war. There was no intention to oppress ; yet there was oppression ; there was no intention to be unjust ; yet there was injustice ; there was every intention of continuing to do good to the native ; yet he became thoroughly disillusioned.

After his outburst of wrath had subsided, and British and Overseas troops had shown him that he was foolish to behave as he had done, he might have been placated, but nothing, so far as we ever heard, was done to explain to the fellah the causes of the treatment he had received from the people whom he had imagined had come to Egypt in 1882 to give him justice, and to save him from the rapacity of the unjust tax-gatherer under whom his fathers had been bowed down. No reward was given to the people who remained loyal. "My men remained loyal," said a British railway inspector to me, "while all around an orgy of destruction was being indulged in, and I sent in a recommendation that some notice should be taken of the fact, but nothing was done."

But what happened during the months between

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the quelling of the riots in March and the coming of the Milner Mission in December 1919? While the authorities drifted, the agitators were busy. They failed, it is true, to rouse the fellaheen to further deeds of violence, even if they tried, which is doubtful; for the latter had found out that in burning down railway-stations and signal-boxes and in breaking up the permanent way they were injuring themselves, to say nothing of bringing down on their own heads just punishment. But it was possible to try to prevent their settling down again under British rule, and so the students and politicians kept them acquainted with their own version of the political situation, and of the doings of the British lords, to such good effect that when the Mission headed by Lord Milner arrived in Egypt, and its members sought to go about quietly to see the state of the country, a very effective boycott was in force in the provinces no less than in the towns. It did not, of course, prevent the Mission learning the true state of affairs, for they were in the country some months; several of the members knew the people and their language, and, moreover, they were visited by a far larger number of Egyptians than the boycotters were aware of. But they had to move about the country less freely than they would have done had not the political agents of the Nationalists done their work.

The fellah loves to hear a good story, the more fantastic the better. He believes in the evil eye and also in jinns, and there are people in Cairo who make a handsome living by trading on his gullibility when he visits the metropolis. It was on his credulity, therefore, that the students counted to keep up his animosity against the British. The stories would be told to the fellaheen while sitting perhaps in the moonlight under a vine; or to a little group seated on chairs outside a Greek coffee-shop in a village; or to fellow-passengers in a railway-carriage. Britain's rule in India was a favourite topic. The slavery to which Indians were reduced was described with just such grotesque details which the fellah could appreciate. The British official in India, it was explained, took his meals from a tray which was supported on the head and uplifted palms of a kneeling Indian. When the lordly Briton had finished his meal he wiped his hands in the beard of the poor kneeling wretch! A long tale that went the rounds was told with characteristic details about the arrival in Egypt of an ex-Anglo-Indian official's wife, and was thoroughly amusing. The official had taken up a post in the Egyptian Government, and his wife followed him later. The lady, it was said, arrived on a ship at Port Said, but the gentleman, her husband, was unable, through pressure of work, to leave Cairo to go to meet her, so he sent his wakeel,

or deputy, with a very fine donkey on which the lady was to travel to the capital. (The fact that the lady was to use a donkey shows the story to be a true fellah tale, for in a town the mode of conveyance would, of course, have been described as a carriage or troombeel, i.e. a car.) The lady spoke no Arabic and the wakeel spoke no English. He merely stood by the donkey waiting for the lady to mount. The lady made signs to the wakeel which he did not understand for some time. At last he discovered that she expected him to kneel down on the ground while she stepped upon his back and thence got on the donkey. Being an Egyptian, of course, the wakeel could not do what the Indians had apparently always done in like cases! But the tale did not end there. The lady is described as having finally arrived in Cairo, an angry scene taking place between herself and her lord about the very disrespectful person he had sent to meet her. "Ah, beloved one," the ex-Anglo-Indian official exclaimed sadly, "you must remember we are no longer in India, but among the Egyptians, who are a very different kind of people, and are not slaves like the Indians."

I shall never forget the charming laugh with which an Egyptian friend told me these and other tales, assuring me that they made the most excellent propaganda.

CHAPTER VIII

PUNITIVE MEASURES

As for the punitive measures, stories reached the American and European Press of terrible atrocities committed by the troops who, awaiting impatiently their return home for demobilisation, were not inclined to love the "bally Gippos" for being the cause of their detention. One Egyptian journalist in London brought out a small weekly paper in which he reproduced pictures and stories of these "atrocities" from the American Press, and distributed it widely. Attention was called to the matter in Parliament, and the man was deported. He arrived in Egypt early in January 1920, when the Milner Mission was making its investigation. I was present at a gathering of journalists in Cairo, at which he was being made much of by his Egyptian confrères as a patriot who had suffered for his country. On greeting him as an old acquaintance I said: "Oh, Mr. —, how could you possibly have printed all those awful stories in your paper?" He replied: "*I never said they were true!*"

I cannot, of course, vouch for the treatment meted out to some of the villages where the punitive

measures were most severe, but I was in touch with a number of officers and men, and from them I could gather little beyond their impatience at having to sit like watchmen, preventing Egyptians from travelling except after the strictest investigation. Two or three years afterwards an ex-officer said: "Of course, we went through the country with fire and sword," but as he was at the time a non-combatant in an office at G.H.Q., I think it unlikely he saw much of what was being done, but he may have handled the military records, and they alone can tell us exactly what happened throughout the country. I made a point, however, of obtaining a report from one C.O. after demobilisation, who wrote to me as follows:

"—— Village.—We surrounded this village one day—or night, rather. A portion of the party departed by motor-lorry part way, the remainder on foot after sundown. Camped the night at different points outside the village. The remainder of the party came from our garrison (also part of our regiment). Just before dawn we deployed and surrounded the village; later, small parties with British and native police officers searched the village for arms and certain alleged leaders of the trouble. As these could not be found, we arrested the 'leading lights' of the town and took them back to camp, and

handed them over to the authorities. The only casualty was one unfortunate ghaffir (watchman) damaged slightly by a bang on the face by an over-zealous private for carrying arms.

“ A similar raid took place at — village. There we found one or two rifles—but again no casualties. At — we billeted certain troops, and fined the village for being implicated in the burning of the railway-station, cutting down of the telegraphs, etc., the fines being so many chickens, dates, etc., per day. At other places we cleared the ‘notables’ out of their houses and occupied them. On our side we had one or two of our men chloroformed and their rifles stolen, and in one case, at — —, we had the strap round the tent-pole cut and a rifle removed. In no case, however, were any natives killed.

“ In Cairo one or two were shot, mostly during disturbances or as a result of shooting at our own troops, but, generally speaking, our policy was to pilot processions, etc., where we wanted them to go, and by keeping them moving and gently helping on those who didn’t want to move to obtain the dispersal of the processions.”

The report continues :

“ I remember a demonstration party which arrived at — and proceeded to the post-office,

for they had been told if they opened the safe they would find LIBERTY inside it !

“ In regard to paying for tibn (chopped straw), etc., which we requisitioned for the horses, our receipts were in duplicate, with carbon between, and when we paid we asked the native to put his mark on the receipt. Many of them would not do so, as they had been told the paper underneath was a declaration that they were satisfied with British rule ! As a matter of fact, the only reason we started paying direct was because the local Omdehs, etc., had been requisitioning large quantities of stuff from their fellow-countrymen and delivering a small proportion to us, and in turn the Omdeh (or whoever he was) informed the unfortunate man we wouldn't pay for it, although we paid without fail for what we got.

“ We were up against ignorance and prejudice to a large extent, and therefore, of course, shooting wasn't much good.”

CHAPTER IX

BRITAIN'S OFFERS TO EGYPT

THE recommendations for the future Government of Egypt contained in the report issued by Lord Milner's Mission astonished the world by their liberality. The members of the Mission had been given a formidable task. They stated that the main difficulty which the conflicting interests involved were : (1) that no settlement of the future of Egypt which did not recognise the claim to the status of nationhood was ever likely to be accepted by the Egyptian people ; (2) that no solution of the Egyptian problem could be enduring unless it provided for the security of the great European interests which are so strongly entrenched in the Nile Valley ; and (3) that though actually not a part of the British Empire, Egypt was of vital importance to the whole imperial system.

To meet these three conditions—"the release of Egypt from the tutelage to which Egyptians so vehemently object," the "safety of British imperial communications," and "the protection of all legitimate foreign interests"—the Mission suggested a Treaty of Alliance between the two countries, to be acquiesced in by the Powers and approved by

"a genuinely representative Egyptain Assembly." Many weeks of 1920 were spent in discussions between the members of the Mission and Zaghlul Pasha and members of his Wafd, or Delegation, while Adly Pasha gave considerable assistance to both sides. The result was the drawing up of a memorandum by the Mission outlining a policy of settlement on which a treaty could be based, the main features of which were: The recognition of the independence of Egypt as a constitutional monarchy, with representative institutions; Egypt to confer upon Great Britain, on the suppression of the Capitulations, the right to safeguard the interests of the foreigners; Egypt to enjoy the right to diplomatic representation in foreign countries; Egypt to confer upon Great Britain the right to maintain a military force to protect her communications ("The presence of this force shall not constitute in any manner a military occupation of the country or prejudice the rights of the Government of Egypt"); the appointment of a British Financial Adviser to replace the Commissioners of the Public Debt¹; and a British Adviser to the Ministry of Justice to watch over the laws affecting

¹ The Commission of the Public Debt was formed in 1876 to watch over Egyptian finances in the interests of the bondholders, and consisted of a French, an Austrian, an Italian, and a British representative. At the same time a French and a British controller were appointed to supervise revenue and expenditure. This Dual Control was abolished upon the British occupation, but the Debt Commission still carries out its functions.

foreigners; Britain's representative in Egypt to be accorded precedence over all other representatives; arrangements for the retirement (or retention) of British and other foreign officials in the Government service of the Egyptian Government.

The treaty was only to come into force with the approval of an Egyptian Parliament after agreements had been come to with foreign Powers for closing the Consular Courts and the reorganisation of the Mixed Courts. It was further provided that the principle of Ministerial responsibility and religious toleration be embodied in the Egyptian constitution; and the abolition of the Capitulations was to be secured by agreements between Great Britain and Egypt and the Capitulatory Powers, rendering possible the application to foreigners of all legislation (including the imposing of taxation) enacted by the Egyptian legislature, these agreements to provide for the transfer of capitulatory rights to Great Britain. A decree was to be issued validating all measures taken under martial law. The Sudan was especially excluded from the memorandum.

Four emissaries were sent by Zaghlul to Egypt with these proposals, and hopes ran high that a settlement was in view, both among Egyptians and the foreign colonies, including, of course, the British. Meetings of representative Egyptians were held, and at first it seemed that the proposals

would be accepted *en bloc* by the general public in Egypt. But a section of the uncompromising politicians, instigated secretly by Zaghlul and pushed on by the "Watanists," the remnants of Kamel Pasha's old party, managed to introduce uncertainty into the minds of the people. The meetings, after the first few days, all passed identical resolutions, in which acceptance of the proposals was made subject to certain reservations. These included important modifications regarding the advisers; the abandonment of the scheme for the changes in the Capitulations in favour of Great Britain; and—most important of all—the abolition of the Protectorate.

The discussion of these questions would have involved reopening the whole matter again. This the Mission declined to do, since any agreement come to would have had to have been the outcome of formal negotiations between the two Governments concerned, and when these took place the points raised could be dealt with. The Mission then proceeded to finish its report, which was published in 1921, and strongly advised His Majesty's Government to enter without undue delay into negotiations with the Egyptian Government for the conclusion of a treaty on the lines recommended in the report.

In 1921 negotiations lasting some weeks took place between Adly Yeghen Pasha, Egypt's Prime

Minister, and Lord Curzon, who was then at the Foreign Office. They failed to reach an agreement. The Memorandum issued by Lord Curzon after the breakdown of the negotiations consisted of a suggested convention between Great Britain and Egypt. It was based upon the Milner suggestions, but in liberality went a step farther, inasmuch as its first clause terminated the Protectorate upon the signature of the proposed convention or treaty of alliance.

Strangely enough, while the Egyptians accepted Lord Milner's scheme with certain reservations, and British politicians at home as well as statesmen in other countries praised its liberality, Lord Curzon's was rejected by all shades of political opinion in Egypt, and met with a considerable amount of condemnation at home. Nevertheless, upon close examination, if the fact be remembered that the Curzon Scheme was a draft of a formal treaty, it did not differ in any essential point as regards the conditions the Egyptians would have to accept from those laid down by the Milner Mission. Article IV, however, provided for a situation unforeseen by the Mission, and laid it down that foreign officers and officials could not be appointed to the Egyptian Army and Civil Service without the previous concurrence of the British High Commissioner.

Also, while the Milner Scheme deliberately left

the Sudan out of consideration, the Curzon Memorandum, while tacitly preserving the *status quo* of the Condominium, foresaw the probability that Egypt would want an Egyptian Commander-in-Chief (Sirdar) to command her army instead of the arrangement in force since the reconquest, whereby the Commander-in-Chief is a British officer holding at the same time the Governor-Generalship of the Sudan. Article VII. of the Curzon draft treaty therefore laid it down that all Egyptian forces in the Sudan should be under the orders of the Governor-General. For the settlement of the water question a board of three conservators, representing Egypt, the Sudan, and Uganda respectively, should safeguard the right of all three countries.

A long letter was addressed to the Sultan of Egypt by Lord Allenby on December 3 regretting the rejection of the draft treaty, particularly because His Majesty's Government considered their proposals as "liberal in character and far-reaching in effect," and because they could not "hold out any prospect of reconsideration of the principle on which they were framed." The letter emphasised that "the claims made by the British Government were not intended to involve the continuance of an actual or virtual protectorate. On the contrary, the ideal which they have sincerely at heart is that of an Egypt enjoying the national prerogatives and international position of a sovereign state, but

closely wedded to the British Empire by a treaty guarantee of common aims and interests." But nothing availed to make the proposals acceptable to the Egyptians, and Adly handed in his resignation to the Sultan.

When analysed, we find that the negotiations between Adly and Lord Curzon had broken down actually on : (1) The future position of the Sudan, Adly claiming Egypt's "incontestable right to sovereignty over the Sudan" ; (2) The location of the British troops on Egyptian soil, the Egyptian delegation insisting upon their being stationed on the banks of the Suez Canal ; (3) The nature of the guarantees exacted by Great Britain for national solvency and for the protection of foreigners, Adly protesting against the presence of the British Financial and Judicial Advisers as an interference which, in the case of the former, amounted to a check on the Government and Parliament of Egypt ; and (4) The measure of control to be exercised by Great Britain over Egyptian foreign affairs.

Thus by December 1921 we find that not only had the Egyptians rejected the proposals of the Milner Mission, made after a series of discussions between Zaghlul Pasha and Lord Milner, but also the draft proposals for a treaty drawn up after the official discussions between the British and Egyptian Governments' representatives, which held

out the promise of the abolition of the Protectorate.

To such a pitch had the expectations of the Egyptian Nationalists been wrought by Zaghlul's uncompromising attitude that complete deadlock ensued upon the publication of the draft treaty. Adly Pasha had resigned, but no Minister dared form a Cabinet with the object of putting into effect the proposals of the British Government. Lord Allenby therefore urged upon the Foreign Office the necessity of going a step farther by abolishing the Protectorate immediately, and declaring Egypt independent, without waiting for a treaty to be signed, but while the Foreign Office was quibbling as to whether it should be announced that His Majesty's Government was merely making an "offer" to abolish the Protectorate or giving an "undertaking" to do so, the political tension in Egypt, after months of comparative calm, was strained to breaking-point.

During the summer of 1921, while the Adly-Curzon negotiations were going on, Zaghlul and the Wafd had been more or less under a cloud. A split had occurred in the ranks of the hitherto "united nation." Zaghlul's bitter attacks upon so able a statesman as Adly had not enhanced his prestige, and the events of Red Monday in Alexandria had also helped to cast a lurid light upon his methods of inciting the populace by his violent statements. Now, while the country was on the

tiptoe of expectation that the British would make the great concession and abolish the Protectorate, Zaghlul and the Wafd made a bid for notoriety once more. Zaghlul summoned a rally of his adherents for December 23, but, in view of the fact that the police were having great difficulty in restraining the wilder elements of Cairo, Lord Allenby prohibited political meetings, well knowing that the excitement thereby engendered, instead of acting as a safety-valve, as would be the case in European countries, would merely lead to street demonstrations and rioting. Without waiting to know what Britain's future policy would be, Zaghlul issued a manifesto protesting against the prohibition of his meeting as a sample of Britain's new policy, with the result that once more Cairo was the scene of serious disorders, and two British soldiers were murdered in the streets. Zaghlul and certain of his associates were then forbidden under martial law to take part in politics. But they were out for defiance, and refused to keep quiet. Lord Allenby, therefore, had Zaghlul and three of his closest adherents arrested and removed to Suez, where they awaited the decision of the British Government as to whether they should be sent to Ceylon or to the Seychelles. But here again, as so often in the past, delay was fatal. If Zaghlul and his associates had been deported immediately, their prestige would have waned, probably never to rise again to its former height,

for the people's attention would have been turned to Sarwat Pasha's efforts to form a Government which would win constitutional freedom. But the failure to get Zaghlul and his associates swiftly out of the way was another blunder for which the authorities had to pay dearly. They were kept first at Suez and then for a time at Aden. Meanwhile the Press worked up a frenzy of excitement on Zaghlul's behalf, and once more the country's attention was centred upon Saad, the blessed martyr (a pun on his name, for Saad means blessed). Rioting broke out, railways were damaged, telegraph wires were cut. But the memory of 1919 was still with the people, and the upheaval was short-lived. The speedy movements of troops, armed Nile steamers, and aeroplanes, as well as the arrival of warships at the ports, warned them of what excesses might lead to in the way of penalties. The native Bar, however, which had previously seemed to be moderating its former extremism, now took on a violent Zaghlulist hue, while school-boy strikes once more became the order of the day.

Meanwhile Lord Allenby was engaged in endeavouring to press upon the Foreign Office the need of coming to a definite decision as to its policy, especially as there were signs that the thinking people were, in their hearts, tired of the deadlock. Evidence of this was given by a split in the newly-formed Wafd which had filled the places vacated

by Zaghlul and his fellow-deportees. Still the Foreign Office saw difficulties ahead in abolishing the Protectorate without any undertaking on the side of the Egyptians, although Lord Allenby had already pointed out that Britain's position in Egypt would be safeguarded by an announcement to the Powers equivalent to a declaration of a British Monroe doctrine for Egypt.

But the Foreign Office could not be convinced, and asked for Lord Allenby's presence in London for a personal discussion of the matter. The High Commissioner was given a somewhat pathetic farewell in Cairo. Whatever his immediate circle thought, few, if any, of the British residents expected him to return to Egypt. He arrived in London on February 8, but twenty days later landed again at Alexandria, with the declaration of independence for Egypt in his pocket. At every station at which his train stopped on his way to Cairo he was the recipient of an ovation from the people, for, although nothing had been published, it was understood that he had at last succeeded in coming to an arrangement with the British Government which would satisfy Egyptian ambitions. One native newspaper in its excitement called him the new Zaghlul! The next day, March 1, Egypt was declared an independent sovereign State, the Sarwat Government came into power, and a commission was set up to draft a constitution for

independent Egypt. The Sultan took the title of King.

On July 5, 1923, an act of indemnity was passed legalising the various enactments which had been promulgated under martial law and this war-time measure, the bitterest side of which Egypt had unfortunately drawn upon herself only after peace was declared, was abolished. The new Constitution having been drafted and revised, an electoral law was promulgated, and the autumn of 1923 saw Egypt busy preparing for the election of her first Parliament as an independent sovereign State.

The momentous document which brought about this happy state of affairs was very short compared with its importance, for it gave Egypt her complete administrative freedom for the first time since 1870, when the Sultan of Turkey used his authority as Ismail's overlord, and ordered him to cease borrowing money from foreigners—the prelude to the interference of the Powers in the interests of the bondholders. The declaration ran as follows :

“Whereas His Majesty's Government, in accordance with their declared intentions, desire forthwith to recognise Egypt as an independent sovereign State ; and

“Whereas the relations between His Majesty's Government and Egypt are of vital interest to the British Empire :

“The following principles are hereby declared :
HE

" 1. The British Protectorate over Egypt is terminated, and Egypt is declared to be an independent sovereign State.

" 2. So soon as the Government of His Highness shall pass an Act of Indemnity with application to all inhabitants of Egypt, martial law as proclaimed on November 2, 1914, shall be withdrawn.

" 3. The following matters are absolutely reserved to the discretion of His Majesty's Government until such time as it may be possible by free discussion and friendly accommodation on both sides to conclude agreements in regard thereto between His Majesty's Government and the Government of Egypt :

" (a) The security of the communications of the British Empire in Egypt.

" (b) The defence of Egypt against all foreign aggression or interference, direct or indirect ;

" (c) The protection of foreign interests in Egypt and the protection of minorities ;

" (d) The Sudan.

" Pending the conclusion of such agreements, the *status quo* in all these matters shall remain intact."

Accompanying the declaration was a letter to the Sultan which ended : " It is now for Egypt to respond, and it is to be hoped she will justly appreciate the good intentions of Great Britain, and that reflection and not passion will guide her attitude."

One would have thought that in view of Great Britain's abolition of the Protectorate and her expressed desire to settle outstanding questions by amicable arrangement, the whole of the Egyptian political world would have ceased from actions calculated to disturb the tide of goodwill which had set in on both sides. But the criminal acts of extremists, which had begun to be a regular feature of political life in Cairo in 1921, were continued. Within a month after the declaration of independence an attempt was made upon the life of a British official ; and during the remainder of the year four were killed and six shot at and wounded, in addition to attempts on the lives of four British soldiers in the streets of Cairo.

Zaghlul, meanwhile, had been removed from the Seychelles to Gibraltar in the early summer. British medical men gave every attention to his health, and the diet they prescribed was reported to have had a beneficial effect—so much so that there is every reason to suppose that this temporary banishment from active participation in politics served to prolong his life ! He was given his freedom, and for a time thereafter remained in France, pulling the political strings in Egypt until he made his second triumphal entry into Egypt in September 1923.

CHAPTER X

INDEPENDENCE

THE British Authorities in Egypt were by no means displeased at the triumph of Zaghlul in the elections for Parliament in the early weeks of 1924. They believed—mistakenly, it has proved—that Zaghlul, once he became complete master of the situation, would exercise a restraining hand upon the violent section among his followers. If he had failed to win a majority, it was feared Egypt might become a prey to much the same internal disruption as Ireland after the withdrawal of the British, and that the fiercest fight for possession of the fat emoluments of Government might lead perhaps to civil war. As a result, of course, the safety of foreigners would have been endangered, and once more British troops would have to be called upon—this time in independent Egypt.

There was a feeling of relief, therefore, when Zaghlul was returned to Parliament as the leader of a large majority, the Opposition being a mere handful. Alas for vain hopes! Zaghlul proved either unwilling or unable to curb criminal violence. His own utterances no doubt fanned the fire. He may have considered it political expediency to

make grandiose speeches, while, in his heart, he may have wished to be more moderate ; or he may have believed that, given a further dose of his heroic implacability, the British might be induced to go even further than they had already gone. At all events, his speeches in Parliament on the four points that remain to be negotiated between Great Britain and Egypt have shown plainly that he expected the British Government to give in on each point to Egyptian demands. During the summer of 1924 statements were made in both Houses of the British Parliament definitely stating that Great Britain had no intention of evacuating the Sudan or giving up her claims in regard to the other reserved points, although the harshness of these utterances was softened by the expression of the hope by the Labour Prime Minister, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, that the Egyptian Government would accept an invitation to enter into negotiations with the British Government on the four reserved points. At this stage Zaghlul made one of his dramatic resignations, but was speedily persuaded to continue in office. There ensued hot debate in the Egyptian Parliament and in the local newspapers whether Egypt should condescend to enter into negotiations at all, and in the midst of this Zaghlul himself was shot at by an Egyptian student. This was proof, if proof were needed, that Zaghlul had failed to control the undesirable

elements among his followers. Not only had he failed in this, but the people whose peculiar mentality had led them deliberately to refrain from rooting out political crime from their midst by denouncing the assassins who had taken the lives of so many British officials and soldiers, now had to bear their just punishment in seeing their hero himself nearly fall a victim to the mania for assassination.

Finally, in September, Zaghlul came to London for the purpose, not of entering into negotiations, but for holding conversations with Mr. MacDonald. It was hoped by the British public generally that the Egyptian Prime Minister would either formulate a basis upon which negotiations could be entered into, or allow the British Premier to make suitable proposals for future discussions. But Zaghlul was faithful to the promises he had made to his supporters in the Egyptian Chamber of Deputies that he would not abate by one jot the claims of Egypt to "complete independence." He insisted upon the withdrawal of all British forces from Egypt and the withdrawal of the Financial and Judicial Advisers (the only two of the host of British officials whom Great Britain wished to retain there in their strictly advisory capacity); the withdrawal of all British control over foreign relations, particularly in connection with the British Government's notification to the Powers

when making the declaration of Egypt's independence that it would tolerate no foreign interference in its relations with Egypt (the British Monroe doctrine for Egypt) ; the abandonment of Britain's claim to protect foreigners and minorities in Egypt, and its claim to share in any way in protecting the Suez Canal. As for the Sudan, Zaghlul had said previously in the Chamber of Deputies, as a reply to the statements made in the British Parliament, that no change in the status of the Sudan (i.e. the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium) would be tolerated : "I declare that the Egyptian nation will not give up the Sudan as long as it exists. It will hold to its rights against all usurpers and on all occasions." There was, therefore, nothing to negotiate about, nor material for a treaty, and Egyptian expectations were doomed to disappointment, while British hopes for a settlement were dashed to the ground. The conversations ended in a complete deadlock.

The Egyptian is politically a half-breed. His Western side is very undeveloped, but he lacks nothing on the Oriental side. It would be far pleasanter to deal with him were he either Western or Eastern, but the mixture creates endless difficulties for himself and others. We must not condemn him too hastily for his want of honesty and straightforwardness, for, although we know that Western supremacy has been built up on efficiency and a general regard for honest dealing,

yet in diplomacy much is left to be desired. Someone once said—long before the war—that if all the mail-bags of European diplomats could be opened simultaneously and read, there would be instant declaration of war all round ! That may be ; but, even when nations are desperately determined to get at each other's throats, war has only resulted after attempts have been made, sometimes perhaps with but very little sincerity, to meet each other's views. During the last two years, what would have happened, we wonder, if either the U.S.A. or Great Britain had maintained the Zaghlul attitude in regard to the rum-runners, the extension of the three-mile limit, the Newcastle Consular affair, or if Britain had not made strenuous efforts to avoid an open breach with France over the occupation of the Rhine provinces ?

Egyptians have again and again declared that they are a weak nation militarily, and must rely upon the righteousness of their cause. Zaghlul's speech on the debate following Lord Parmoor's statement in the House of Lords on June 28 contained the following, among other passages : " It is true we are weak ; we have no army or fleet ; but we are strong, because we are weak ; we are strong because right is on our side, for weakness with right is a strong arm, and," he continued, " as for the negotiations, these declarations [the statements made in the House of Commons by the

Prime Minister] say that they will later take place on the basis of the declaration of February 28, 1922, and I have said more than once that I repudiate it. I repudiated it when I was out of the Government, and again in the programme of my Cabinet, and I still repudiate it. Although they said they proposed to negotiate on the basis of the declaration of February 28, 1922, my Cabinet cannot in any case whatever negotiate on this basis. I told you some time ago that if there were no means to negotiate except on this basis, I would not enter into them, and I say so now."

Zaghlul certainly kept his word, and did not enter into negotiations with Mr. MacDonald. It is difficult to understand why, in the circumstances, he came to London at all. During his visit, in talking to journalists, he made no secret of the fact that he would not move one hair's breadth from his position. But it is difficult to understand why he consented to be Prime Minister at all, in view of his repudiation of the declaration of February 28, 1922, for through it alone has a constitution been framed, a Parliament set up, and his premiership made possible. His position is that of an heir, entering into an estate, declaring that the will by which it became his was a forgery.

CHAPTER XI

ZAGHLULISM

EGYPT has not yet produced a governing class of her own. There are many men in the country who possess statesmanlike abilities, but so far those who have come to the front are, with very few exceptions, not Egyptians, although they or their fathers have adopted Egypt as their home. Zaghlul stands out among prominent men as one of the very few of Egyptian blood, but Zaghlul must be described as an agitator rather than a statesman.

Agitation is useful and necessary when political freedom or social reforms are to be won, but, once the agitators have done their work, statesmen are needed to step in and secure practical results from agitation; they must consolidate the gains of the pioneers. Great Britain could never have made the concessions contained in the Declaration of February 28, 1922, to Zaghlul, for the simple reason he would not have accepted them, and has since had no good word for those who did. Sarwat Pasha, followed by Yehia Ibrahim Pasha, therefore, had the honour of ushering in the new era. Even when, as the result of the declaration, Egypt

as an independent sovereign State elected her first Parliament, and Zaghlul became the head of the Government, he was still unable to forget that he was no longer an agitator pure and simple, but a Prime Minister. The rôle of statesman is far more difficult than that of agitator, and, though Zaghlul is not without ability, he arrived in London in September 1924 for his conversations with Mr. MacDonald still as an agitator, with an uncompromising demand that Britain should give way all along the line to Egypt. The whole visit was, therefore, worse than wasted, for if it disappointed the British it reduced Egyptians almost to despair.

Some would have us believe that Zaghlul is the victim of his associates of the Wafd, the students and the "Watani" party, who push him to extremes. It may well be so, for a story went the rounds in 1921 that lends colour to this explanation of Zaghlul's intransigence. When his quarrel with Adly Pasha was at its height, he awoke one morning with the determination to end it for the sake of the "united front" by accepting Adly's invitation to become a member of the official delegation, which was to enter into negotiations with the British Government, instead of insisting on being its leader, as he had been doing. He communicated his intention to a young friend, who went out hurriedly and told one of Zaghlul's chief secretaries (said by some to be his evil genius). The

secretary arrived post haste, and without letting his chief know that he was aware of his sudden decision to bury the hatchet and resume friendly intercourse with Adly, told him he wished to congratulate him on the good news that he (Zaghlul) would hear the next day. This roused the great man's curiosity (as it was intended it should), and he begged his secretary to make him happy that very day, whereupon the secretary with apparent reluctance told him that the news would be published on the morrow that the Adly Government was about to fall, for Lord Curzon had "repudiated" the Premier, and had made up his mind not to have anyone lead the official negotiations but their beloved leader, Saad. Zaghlul, of course, did not breathe a word of his good intentions of the morning to his secretary, but increased by tenfold his abuse of the enemy, and so nothing more was heard about reconciliation!

Whatever foundation of truth there may be in the story, we may at least give Zaghlul the benefit of the doubt that when he has had occasional glimpses of true statesmanship he has been prevented from using his better judgment by his satellites, who know that their chief's retirement into the background, or even to a second place in the counsels of the nation, means the frustration of their personal ambitions.

His influence from the first has been enormous,

but it has been largely due to the fevered backing of the students and the determined cunning of the place-hunting members of the Wafd. Through their propaganda, as well as his own wide promises, the common people became infatuated with his very name. Nothing could have proved this better than the reception given him on his return to Egypt on April 5, 1921, for the first time since his deportation to Malta. He had remained in voluntary exile for two years, the embargo on his movements having been removed within a month of his deportation. The magnificence of his homecoming was a tribute from his fellow-countrymen for his services in the cause of Egyptian independence, but his amazing rudeness to his sovereign came as a shock to many people, and showed a childishness that is one of the great man's failings.*

Foreigners, too, have given Zaghlul a high position as a leader. It has been for a long time firmly believed in this country that Zaghlul is the one man for Egypt, and that none but him could be truly said to represent the aspirations of the Egyptian people. That was an exaggeration in 1919; for more than two years it has not been true, and to-day it is less than ever the truth. We have a parallel case at home. During the war Mr. Lloyd George was the idol of the people of Great Britain.

* See page 330.

Even his pronounced political enemies gave him a backing, and at the time of his greatest popularity it was difficult to make any individual realise that it was the parlous condition of the country rather than the greatness of Mr. Lloyd George which led people to hang on his words and his former political opponents to acclaim him as the saviour of the country. Once conditions became normal Mr. Lloyd George took his place again as merely one of the great living politicians; the halo he wore during the war disappeared, and his political enemies declared he was only common clay—very common, some would say—after all. Yet if a foreigner—say an Egyptian—had been attached to Mr. Lloyd George's suite when he travelled northwards at any one of the last three elections—1922, 1923, 1924—and had witnessed the ovations he received at each stopping-place, heard the maddened enthusiasm of his supporters at the large meetings he addressed, and saw the magic effects of his oratory, they would have been perfectly justified in going away and saying there was only one man in Great Britain who represented the British people, and that was Mr. Lloyd George.

Their position would have been much that of a group of Labour M.P.'s called the "Swan Mission" who visited Egypt in the autumn of 1921 on the invitation of Zaghlul, and went away under the

impression that there were none but Zaghlulites in the country. The Egyptians are adepts at stage-management, and the visitors saw exactly what they were meant to see, even down to a scrimmage at Benha, when the police used their sticks on the mob who broke the law and the station barriers at the same time, and swarmed on to the platform to see Zaghlul and the British " Liberal " Members of Parliament (for it would never have done to refer to them as working men !). Their report may have been worth to Zaghlul the lavish expenditure it cost his party, but, beyond giving the visitors an idea of the scenery of the Delta and the Egyptian climate in September, as well as a taste of the luxury of the European hotels in Cairo and Alexandria, the visit would not add more weight to their views on the Egyptian problem than would the presence of Egyptians with Mr. Lloyd George on a speech-making tour produce a true estimate of British political feeling. The M.P.'s entirely failed to realise the significance of the attitude of the Bedouin chief staying at the same hotel as they did in Alexandria, who refused to converse direct with their Zaghlulist pilot, but, to the amusement of onlookers, employed a third person even when speaking Arabic, so averse was he from having anything to do with Zaghlulism !

The whole country since the war ended has been bent upon gaining independence, but Zaghlul's

method of reaching the desired goal has been by no means acceptable to the whole people and particularly to the more responsibly-minded among those who were at first heart and soul with him. A very interesting light is thrown upon his present position by an investigation into the attitude now taken towards him by the original members of his Wafd, or Delegation, men chosen by him, and whom he declared again and again to be absolutely representative of the Egyptian people. What do they think of their leader now? In December 1918 fifteen names in addition to Zaghlul's were appended to an appeal addressed to the representatives of foreign Governments in Egypt, and all the correspondence Zaghlul had with the British authorities or with the members of the Peace Conference was signed by him as " Vice-President of the Legislative Assembly " and " President of the Egyptian Delegation," who were :

ALY SHAARAWY Pasha, Member of the Legislative Assembly.

ABDEL AZIZ FAHMY Bey, Member of the Legislative Assembly. Leader of the Bar (Bâtonnier de 'Ordre des Avocats).

MOHAMMED ALY Bey, Member of the Legislative Assembly.

ABDEL LATIF EL MEKABBATY Bey, Member of the Legislative Assembly.

MOHAMMED MAHMOUD Pasha, Former governor of a province (Mudir).

AHMED LOUTFY EL SAYED Bey, Former Director of the National Library.

ISMAIL SIDKY Pasha, a former Minister.

SINNOT HANNA Bey, a Coptic Notable, Member of the Legislative Assembly.

HAMAD EL BASSIL Pasha, Member of the Legislative Assembly.

MAHMOUD ABOU'L NASR Bey, former Leader of the Bar.

GEORGE KHAYAT Bey, a Coptic Notable.

DR. HAFEZ AFIFY Bey, a doctor of Cairo.

HUSSEIN WASSIF Pasha, Member of the Legislative Assembly.

MICHEL LUTFALLA Bey, Member of the Legislative Assembly:

ABDEL KHALIK MADKOUR Pasha, Member of the Legislative Assembly, President of the Egyptian Chamber of Commerce.

I have traced the subsequent careers of those who are still alive, with the following results :

Aly Shaarawy Pasha and Hussein Wassif are dead.

Abdel Aziz Fahmy, Mohammed Aly, Abd el Latif el Mekabbaty, Mohammed Mahmoud, Ismail Sidky were among those who split off from Zaghlul in 1921 and are now members of the Liberal-Constitutionalist Party in opposition to Zaghlul.

Sinnot Hanna Bey and George Khayat Bey, two Copts, are still members of the Wafd, the former being a member of the Chamber of Deputies ; Hamad el Bassil is also a faithful henchman and is vice-president of the Chamber.

Mahmoud Abou'l Nasr Bey and Abd el Khalik Madkour are said to be "no longer in politics" while Ahmed Loutfy el Sayed Bey is Director of the National Library and is no longer in any sense a politician, and does not even give moral support to Zaghlul.

Dr. Hafez Afify Bey is the manager of the *Al Siyassa*, the newspaper of the Constitutional-Liberals, the Parliamentary "Opposition" to Zaghlul. There remains Michel Lutfalla Bey (now Emir) who interests himself solely in Syrian politics.

Of the three Pashas who were arrested in March 1919 with Zaghlul and sent to Malta, one only has remained faithful to the chief—Hamad el Bassil.

Dare we say that these men and others of equal prominence such as Adly, Wahba, Sarwat, Ziwar, Yehia Nessim, Mohammed Said Pashas, who all have been Premiers within the last three years, are less patriotic than Zaghlul because they choose to move cautiously in their dealings with Britain? Each and all risked death at the hands of the murderous clique in taking the premiership. They are, therefore, not behind Zaghlul in their willingness to lay

down their lives for their country. Adly refused to come to an agreement with Lord Curzon in 1921, and Sarwat refused to form a Cabinet unless the Protectorate were first abolished. These men have a following in the country far larger than is recognised, but the political methods of the Zaghlulists, not only in the streets of Cairo but in remoter parts of the country, are of the kind that even if a man has his own ideas on the political situation he finds it safer to go with the crowd who are held spell-bound by the name and fame of Zaghlul.

It was impossible to witness the jubilation of the country on the day of Zaghlul's first return to Egypt without sharing to some extent the enthusiasm of the people and wishing them a speedy realisation of their hopes for self-determination. The last thing that admits of floral decoration is perhaps a steam engine. Yet on that day every driver of a locomotive even on little-used tracks had decorated his engine with garlands of beautiful flowers; every little group of huts had its banners and its crowds of joyful peasants shouting "liberty" and "independence" and the name of their hero. Did they really know what the words "liberty" and "independence" meant? No more than the men referred to in the report of the officer quoted on page 86-7 who believed that "liberty" was locked up in the station safe.

Many times I have said to a man, hoarse with shouting: "Well, you seem to be happy about getting Istiklal el Tam (complete independence). Why are you so anxious to get rid of the British?"

"We don't want the British to go."

"But if you get your Istiklal el Tam, the British will have to go. That's what it means."

And invariably came the answer, "No, never. Malesh (never mind) the English are nice, I am sure they will never go." And he would resume his shouting for "complete independence."

In keeping up a determined fight for independence Zaghlul has done what probably no other man could have done, but over against that we must put the great disservice he has rendered his country in that he has not steadfastly set his face against rioting and slaughter.

During the nights that preceded Red Monday in Alexandria (May 23, 1921) when the mob ran amok and killed Greeks and Italians, burning some alive, Cherif Pasha Street, the main street of the European quarter of the town, which is lined with shops containing probably millions of pounds worth of merchandise, was occupied nightly by men and boys from the worst dock quarters armed with sticks, while drawn up among them were Municipal dust carts, "borrowed" for the occasion, filled with huge stones, and wagons heaped with "borrowed" tins of petroleum and more stones. Some men

squatted on the pavement kerbs while others lounged about waiting for the police to dare to attempt to move them off. This was the state of things I encountered for several nights when returning from the office of the *Gazette* after the paper was on the machines.

One night a few doors away from my own entrance where the doorkeeper and my servant were standing looking out for me, I ventured to address one of the occupiers of the kerb and asked him what all this display was for.

"For Saad," was the reply. (Zaghlul is always mentioned affectionately by his first name by his adherents.)

"For Saad?" I queried. "Does Saad want you to do this?" pointing to the ugly preparations for incendiarism.

"We want Saad, not Adly," was the gruff reply, meaning that they sided with Zaghlul in the quarrel as to who should lead the delegation which was to go to London to negotiate with Lord Curzon.

I passed on. Zaghlul Pasha was in Cairo filling the air with abuse of Adly, his rival, but not one word did he say to call off the ruffians who, unable to reason, let off their pent-up emotions by massacring Europeans who were not in the least interested in this purely personal dispute.

CHAPTER XII

THE " PROS AND CONS "

LEAVING for the moment the question of the Sudan, the three points upon which Britain and Egypt must come to an agreement in the near future are officially given thus :

(a) The security of the British communications in Egypt ;

(b) The defence of Egypt against all foreign aggression, direct or indirect ;

(c) The protection of foreign interests in Egypt and the protection of minorities.

It is, of course, obvious that no country can feel itself independent if it is occupied permanently with foreign troops. Since September 1882, the Citadel of Cairo, built by Saladin and fortified by Napoleon, and again by Mohammed Ali, has been in the possession of Tommy Atkins, whose presence there and elsewhere in Egypt is, as Mr. E. Dicey expressed it in *The Story of the Khedivate*, " the bottom fact of the Egyptian situation."

The numbers of the Army of Occupation have varied from time to time according to the degree

of military alarm at home. After the reconquest of the Sudan they fell to under 3,000; the Den-shawai incident and the Turkish frontier dispute caused them to leap up until, just before the war, there were 6,067 British soldiers in Egypt. The Army of Occupation is paid for by the Egyptian Treasury following an agreement come to with Tewfik Pasha in September 1882, after Tel-el-Kebir. The amount paid for the year 1921-1922 was £E. 146,250. (The Egyptian Chamber of Deputies, without giving any notice to the British authorities and with, apparently, no discussion, decided on June 28, 1924 to strike out this credit from the budget of the current year, thereby breaking the agreement made by the Egyptian Government and till then honourably kept.) In 1912 the authorities at the War Office were being urged to increase the Army of Occupation as a measure of Imperial defence, but some experts were against shutting up a large force permanently in Egypt "lest it should meet the fate of Napoleon's army," while others remembered that "we have never meant to stay there in perpetuity," or, as one writer put it, "our ultimate ideal always presupposes an Egypt strong enough to defend herself."

The case for the Egyptians has been put with considerable breadth of vision and tolerance by the late Sir William Hayter, at one time Legal Adviser to the Egyptian Government, in a paper

read for him during his last illness at the Summer School at Cambridge in 1924. He said: "There remain to be considered the questions reserved by the British Government by the Declaration of February 28, 1922. One of these, the protection of minorities, has probably ceased to be of any importance, since the Copts have very wisely decided to throw in their lot with their Moslem fellow-countrymen. . . . Foreigners again are for the most part amply protected by the Capitulations; and the Powers are, generally speaking, perfectly able to safeguard the interests of their own nationals in Egypt if they should require to be safeguarded. There is no reason to suppose that foreigners will not live in Egypt in the same peace and comfort under King Fuad as they did under Mohammed Aly Pasha and Ismail Pasha. . . . The security of British communications in Egypt and the defence of Egypt against foreign aggression may be considered as cognate questions. Can these objects be attained without the maintenance of a British Army in Egypt? This is mainly a military and naval problem; but from the Egyptian point of view, it is most desirable that some means should be found by which a continued British military occupation could be rendered unnecessary. It may be said that an army stationed in Egypt, under a treaty with the sole function of defending Egypt and safeguarding our communications, would no

longer be an Army of Occupation. But no such considerations are at all likely to appeal to any people that has developed a National consciousness. . . . It is a matter of National sentiment, against which the material advantages conferred on Egypt by the presence of a British force weigh as nothing."

What is the case for the other side? To take the question of defence first: The military people cannot be expected to view the question of Imperial defence like idealists imbued with the idea of self-determination. Their business is to conjure up an enemy attacking and to decide which is the best strategic centre from which to repulse him, or better still, make him afraid to attack. The argument that the Convention of 1888 protects the Suez Canal, was proved during the war to be a fallacy, though the Egyptians still solemnly point to it as a reason against the supposed need of British troops to guard it. It was not until the war that it was realised how vulnerable a spot the Canal is for British communications. It had been imagined that the difficulties of crossing the Sinai desert, and the presence of the fleet in the Mediterranean, constituted sufficient protection for Egypt on the Eastern side. Yet the Turkish Army reached the Canal and came within a little of getting right over it. To the asseverations of the Egyptians that they are willing to defend the

Canal to the last drop of their blood—many were heard to say this, hand on heart, while Zaghlul was holding his conversations with Mr. MacDonald—the obvious rejoinder is : On whose behalf would they defend it ? Would they, had the choice been left to them, have been willing to preserve British communications with the Far East and the Dominions during the war with Turkey ?

The security of communications and the defence of Egypt against foreign aggression are not the only reasons which move the British Government to keep an army in Egypt though they now form the chief military reasons for the Occupation. The protection of foreign interests is, as the late Judge Hayter said, covered by the Capitulations. But he moved chiefly among Egyptians of the higher classes, many of them judges like himself. He would have doubtless modified his views had he been an ordinary business man, or would have uttered them more as pious expressions of belief in a future generation of enlightened Egyptians rather than as foundations for a practical policy of to-day. If one may judge from the expressions of opinion heard when moving about among the cosmopolitan inhabitants of Egypt, then it is certain that the average foreigner with property and his own and his family's lives to guard, does not look upon the Capitulations as sufficient protection. Ismail and his predecessors no doubt could overawe the Egyptians into respecting

foreigners, for the word of those rulers was law, and they had need of the foreigner for their own purposes. During the outbreaks that occurred at intervals after the Armistice, the foreign communities in Egypt made it quite plain that they considered it was the business of the British troops to preserve order, and to make it possible for them to keep whole skins in Egypt. At the same time, in view of the possibility that the British might withdraw, they did not want to have a permanently unhealed breach between themselves and their "hosts"—the term the Egyptians always use when speaking of their relationship to foreigners living in Egypt—so while they extended outward homage to the Egyptians' desire for independence, at the same time, they expected and hoped that the British would keep a "stiff upper lip" or else allow one of their own governments to step in and preserve order—the last being perhaps the more desirable expedient. This point of view is not unnatural, for it must be remembered that though the Nationalist campaign of assassination has been directed against British officials and soldiers, yet when disorders break out, the xenophobe fury of the people bears down upon all and sundry who happen to be foreigners, and so it happened that in the massacres of 1882 and 1921 in Alexandria, and the riots in Cairo, it was the Greeks, Italians, Armenians, and Jews who suffered the most at the

hands of the mob. Said a foreign resident to me one day: "The Capitulations did not save the foreigners in '82, nor did the combined Capitulations and Army of Occupation save them in 1921." On this occasion the local police had begged the military authorities to allow them to deal with the conditions that were brewing in Alexandria, and prevailed upon the commanding officer to keep his troops in barracks. The arrival of the Sherwoods, however, when things had got beyond the power of the police to deal with, had an instantaneous effect in restoring order, the appearance of one British soldier on horseback being sufficient sometimes to scatter a mob that only a short time before had been seizing the steel helmets of their own armed police and tossing them in the air!

Can nothing, then, be done to meet Egyptian aspirations, and at the same time satisfy the British need for safe communications and the foreigners' need for a quiet life? An agreement must be reached, for alternate orgies of assassination and foreign repression at the point of the bayonet are bad for Egypt, for Britain, and for the world.

There must, of course, be mutual concessions. Both sides will have to give way on some points. Zaghlul has refused to admit that British troops might be stationed in the Canal zone, but that is better than having them in the Citadel in Cairo, where the British military think they ought to be.

Therefore the Canal zone would be a concession on both sides. There is no reason why the experiment should not be tried of placing the Army of Defence, which sounds better than the Army of Occupation and is nearer the truth, at or near Port Said, Ismailia, and Suez, at the same time maintaining the troops at Mustapha and retaining the Air Base at Aboukir. The politicians in Cairo would then be hardly aware that there were any foreign troops in the country at all, for the proposed stations are in reality far more European than Egyptian centres. And to maintain the principle that the army is there for the purpose of defence a certain number of Egyptian troops might be stationed near the British detachments. But before any move is made arterial roads of the best construction, such as do not exist at present anywhere in Egypt, should be laid between the metropolis and each of the above-named places. The danger of a fellaheen rising (this time against Pashadom) would be greatly minimised thereby. Railways and telegraphic communications can be cut in a few hours by a determined mob, but it would be a far tougher proposition suddenly to make communications by armoured cars and tanks on well-metalled roads impossible.

As for the Advisers, they should become less of a vital necessity as time passes, and when the terms of the present officials' services end, their posts

might be suppressed. The bondholders' interests are protected by the Commissioners of the Public Debt, and as the Egyptians apparently prefer to remain in bondage to many Powers rather than to one—as has been shown by their objection to Great Britain's taking over the responsibilities now vested in the Capitulations, as proposed by the Milner Memorandum and the Curzon draft treaty—the Commission might remain until the debt is liquidated.

There remain some other points, such as the special position which the British Government desires its representative should take in Egypt, and to which Zaghlul and other members of the Chamber of Deputies have taken exception. Again there should be no difficulty in mutual accommodation here. If it is felt that the dignity of independent Egypt will not admit of one foreign representative having a greater standing than another, why should not Great Britain meet Egypt's sensitiveness on this score by being content with the usual ambassador or minister plenipotentiary, or whatever his rank may be, to carry out the ordinary duties of such links with foreign countries? For in view of the special relations between the two countries, which presumably will be established by an *entente*, the British representative would thereby always be accorded a special hearing by the Egyptian Government.

PART II

CHAPTER XIII

THE SUDAN PROBLEM

SPEAKING in the House of Commons on Sudan affairs on February 23, 1885, Mr. Gladstone confessed that he was faced with conditions which "passed entirely beyond the limits of such political difficulties" as he had known in the course of an experience of half a century. A study of the events which led to such a state of affairs reveals the fact that Mr. Gladstone's Ministry was at least in part responsible for the very difficulties of which he complained when, to quote Lord Milner, "everything—yes, absolutely everything—seemed bent upon going wrong at one and the same time, alike in military matters, in diplomacy, and in politics."

In 1820 Mohammed Ali added vast tracts of the Sudan to the Pashalik of Egypt. His object in sending his son Ismail to undertake the conquest of the country was to obtain further supplies of black soldiers; he also hoped to find gold, which in ancient times had been the most valuable of many valuable exports from the country, and had led to the conquest of Cush, or Ethiopia, in the Twelfth Dynasty. Mohammed Ali's conquest resulted in no gold, but he obtained thousands of

slaves, who were sent down to Assouan and there drilled. The anguish of the people under the slave-traders was such that the British Consul, Dr. J. Bowring, was induced by what he saw to make a strong appeal to the great pasha. In 1840, therefore, Mohammed Ali paid a flying visit to the newly subdued territories to see the state of affairs for himself, and promised to mend some of the abuses connected with the slave-trade, and even to abolish it altogether. But it continued to flourish.

By the time Ismail Pasha became ruler the condition of the people in the Sudan under Egyptians had become such a scandal that foreign countries interested in the repression of the slave-trade intervened, and brought pressure to bear upon Ismail to stop the practice. Ismail sent Sir Samuel Baker who, following Speke and Grant, had already explored the sources of the Nile, with the double object of repressing the slave-trade and at the same time extending the Khedive's Sudan dominions until they covered an area of 1,300 miles in each direction from Wadi Halfa, on the north, to the Equator, on the south, and from Massowah, on the coast of the Red Sea, to the western limit of Dafur.

The total approximate area of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan is given in the *Sudan Almanac* for 1924 as 1,014,600 square miles. The total population is estimated to be 5,852,000.

The Egyptians are fond of referring to Ismail's "beneficent rule over the Sudan." Unfortunately, the records are all against them in their claim that Ismail's was an enlightened government of the Sudanese. The representatives of the Egyptian Government at Khartum leased the various districts out to so-called traders, who were simply slave-dealers, and the method of tax-gathering by bashi-bazouks was an orgy of cruelty and plunder. If an attempt had been made to govern the provinces in even a moderately satisfactory manner, the revolt under the Mahdi would never have taken place.

Sir Samuel Baker retired, and General Gordon was appointed to take his place, but not immediately, and in the time that intervened between the two appointments the slave-trading operations which Sir Samuel Baker had crushed were in full swing again, and, in addition, the Egyptian occupation of the newly acquired territory had become merely nominal. Gordon's work of organisation was characterised by determination and skilfully directed energy. Before his retirement in 1876 he had divided the country into garrisoned districts, and had got the tribes into something resembling peace. Then came the war with Abyssinia, which ended disastrously for Egypt. The whole country became restless and disturbed; the slave-trade, which Gordon had made such heroic efforts to annihilate, was revived under the lax discipline

and secret connivance of the Egyptian officials. In Egypt, Ismail's affairs were going from bad to worse, and it was not to be expected that outlying, newly acquired, and entirely uncivilised provinces could remain pacific while the Home Government was tottering to its fall.

In order to stem the turbulent conditions fast developing, Gordon was requested by Ismail in 1877 to return, and was appointed Governor-General of the whole of the Sudan, including the lately won provinces. With superhuman energy and with no adequate means—for the Egyptian treasury was entirely unable to cope with the financial output necessary for retaining such immense territory—he took up his hopeless task, stifling revolt in all directions, and putting down the slave-trade. He was then sent on a mission to Abyssinia to arrange terms of peace, and after this, in 1879, broken in health, gave up his Governor-Generalship.

Once more the slave-trade flourished, and the tax-collectors—bashi-bazouks—plundered and robbed the people. This was the fertile soil upon which the Mahdi planted his seed of religious revival and conquest.

While Egypt was in the throes of the political crisis which ended in the rebellion of Arabi, a man named Mohammed Ahmed arose in the Sudan (August 1881), proclaiming himself to be the

Mahdi (Messiah or Prophet) who, tradition said, was to come into the world to convert it to Islam. He declared his heaven-sent mission to be that of the conquest of the Sudan, then Egypt, and finally the whole world. His success in acquiring a following was made easy by the deplorable condition into which, after the good work of Baker and Gordon, the country had been allowed to fall. In 1882 came the British occupation of Egypt, and the winter following Colonel Stewart was sent to the Sudan to report upon its condition. He found the people flocking to the standard of the Mahdi, and the Egyptian garrisons in no condition to deal with a formidable rising.

Colonel Stewart wrote in January 1883: "The troops in garrison here (at Khartum) are working at elementary drill tactics and are making some progress. It is, however, very uphill work; the officers are so ignorant and so incapable of grasping the meaning of the simplest movement. Quite one-third of the troops are also ignorant of the use of the rifle, and they would be more formidable as adversaries were they simply armed with sticks." And further: "It is impossible for me to criticise too severely the conduct of the Egyptian troops, both officers and men, towards the natives. Their general conduct and overbearing manner is almost sufficient to cause a rebellion."

It is no wonder, therefore, that the brave and

fanatical dervishes defeated the Egyptian troops again and again.

Hitherto the management, or mismanagement, of the Sudan had been entirely the affair of the Egyptian Government. After the Occupation, when Britain undertook the responsibility of "establishing order" in Egypt, she did her best to ignore the fact that Egypt was responsible for the condition and government of the Sudan. A sincere facing of this fact would have prevented the tragedies that took place in that country during the long months ere Britain woke up to the sorrowful truth that her assumed responsibility in regard to Egypt equally covered Egypt's responsibility towards that province. To quote from *England and Egypt*: "We plunged into the business of setting Egypt on her legs without any conception of the extent or the difficulty of the task. As the magnitude of our undertaking began to reveal itself to us, we strove by every means in our power to limit our obligations and to narrow the field of our interference. . . . And our judgment was never more hopelessly at fault than when we averted our eyes from what was going on in the Sudan, and hugged ourselves with the fiction that we were not responsible for the action of the Egyptian Government in that region."

The first encounters of the Egyptian garrisons with the rebels proved the former to be no match

for the Mahdi's men. On February 3, 1883, El Obeid, the capital of Kordofan, fell. But it was the disaster which happened to General Hicks and his army in November of that year which sealed the fate of the Sudan. Commenting on the political effect of the tragedy, Lord Cromer says (*Modern Egypt*, vol. i., p. 363) :

“ The British Government should have insisted on the adoption of a rational and practicable policy. Unfortunately, they abstained from all interference. They appear, indeed, to have seen that the wisest plan for the Egyptian Government would have been to stand on the defensive at Khartum. But they did nothing to enforce this view.

“ The British Government had, in fact, been led much against their will into the occupation of Egypt. They were now fearful that they might unconsciously drift into military intervention in the Sudan.

“ Lord Granville was determined to guard against the danger. He refused to have anything to say to Sudan matters. The fact that General Hicks's telegrams were sent to the various Egyptian authorities through Sir Edward Malet roused him to a sense of danger. He thought that the British representative, by allowing himself to become the medium of

communication between Cairo and Khartum, might involve his Government in some degree of responsibility. On May 7, Lord Granville, therefore, telegraphed to Mr. Cartwright, who temporarily occupied Sir Edward Malet's place: 'Her Majesty's Government are in no way responsible for the operations in the Sudan, which have been undertaken under the authority of the Egyptian Government, or for the appointment or actions of General Hicks.' "

This disclaimer of responsibility was repeated in a letter addressed by Sir Edward Malet to Chérif Pasha on May 22. General Hicks's army was totally destroyed on November 5, 1883.

The British Government had to be roused from its state of passivity, and Lord Cromer (then Sir E. Baring), who had arrived in Cairo shortly before the Hicks disaster became known, recommended Egypt's withdrawal from the Sudan in view of the state of the Egyptian Treasury and the impossibility of those who were in charge of the country's finances being able to supply either money or troops wherewith to continue to hold those parts of the Sudan not already under the sway of the Mahdi. The possibility of sending Indian or British soldiers to assist the Egyptian Government to hold the Sudan was mooted, as was also the question of inviting the Sultan of Turkey to send troops for

the same purpose. Both suggestions were negatived. It is interesting to note Lord Cromer's summing up of the situation at this point, particularly as he deals with arguments which even to-day are used by Egyptians about the evacuation of the Sudan by Egypt :

“ Turning to the criticisms made, not so much by responsible party leaders as by the general public, it is to be observed that the view which was at the time freely expressed, and which has to some extent floated down the tide of history, was that the British Government were responsible for the relapse of the Sudan into barbarism, and that not only might that country have been preserved to Egypt, but that it would have been so preserved had the Egyptian Government been allowed to follow their own devices. General Gordon did a good deal to propagate this idea. His journal abounds with statements fixing the responsibility for the abandonment of the Sudan on the British Government. I maintain that this view is entirely erroneous. Save in respect to one sin of omission, that is to say, that no veto was imposed on the Hicks expedition, the British Government were in no way responsible for the loss of the Sudan. They were responsible for obliging the Egyptian Government to look the facts fairly in the face. Now the main fact was

this—that after the defeat of General Hicks's army the Sudan was lost to Egypt beyond any hope of recovery, unless some external aid could be obtained to effect its reconquest. That external aid could only come from two countries, England or Turkey. The British Government decided that the troops of Great Britain should not be used to reconquer the Sudan. This decision was ratified by British public opinion, neither am I aware that anyone who could speak with real authority on the subject was at the time found to challenge its wisdom. It must be borne in mind that, if British troops had been sent to the Sudan in 1883, they would have been obliged to stay there in considerable numbers. The Egyptian Government could not, with their own resources, have held the country even after the forces of the Mahdi had been defeated. The conditions of the problem which awaited solution were, therefore, essentially different from those which obtained some thirteen years later, when the reconquest of the Sudan was taken in hand. Turning to the other alternative, it may be said that, although the proposal to utilise the Sultan's services gave occasion to some diplomatic trifling, no one seriously wished Turkish troops to be employed. Everyone felt that the remedy would be worse than the disease."

The policy of withdrawal was naturally not particularly acceptable to the Egyptian Government. Chérif Pasha, the Prime Minister, resigned, and Nubar Pasha formed a Cabinet with the policy of evacuating the Sudan. This was rendered the more imperative in view of the severe reverses experienced by the Egyptian troops in the Eastern Sudan at the hands of the Mahdi's lieutenant, Osman Digna, in the autumn of 1883.

On January 18, 1884, General Gordon was appointed by the British Government to proceed to Khartum to report upon the military situation in the Sudan, on the measures to be taken for the security of the Egyptian garrisons still holding on in the Sudan, and for the safety of the European population in Khartum, and to perform other duties which the Egyptian Government might entrust to him. The Egyptian Government on his arrival in Cairo instructed him to effect the evacuation of the Sudan, and for this purpose he was made Governor-General of the Sudan.

Lord Cromer blames himself, in his history of those times, for having been responsible for General Gordon's proceeding to the Sudan via Cairo, instead of through the Suez Canal to Suakin. Had he gone to Suakin he would never have reached Khartum, since the Suakin—Berber road was blocked by the rebels. But it would be impossible to

apportion fairly the blame for any one of the mistakes which were made by officials, politicians, statesmen, and soldiers alike during a time of the most extraordinary difficulties, when the fate not only of gallant officers like Hicks, Gordon, Stewart, and others, but of Egyptian and British troops, as well as millions of Sudanese, hung upon the understanding of men far removed from the scene of the drama.

General Gordon's appointment, and the incidents connected with it, culminating in the tragedy of his death, formed at the time, as well as later, the subject of acrimonious discussion, and we are free now to draw our own conclusions from the records of the time.

Arrived at Khartum, Gordon proposed that Zobeir Pasha, notorious as a slave-dealer in the Sudan, and at that moment detained in Cairo, should be sent to Khartum to take over the Governorship when he (Gordon) should withdraw, as he considered Zobeir's influence would go a long way to break the Mahdi's power, for Zobeir was a powerful leader opposed to the Mahdi. But the British Government would not allow Zobeir to be sent, basing their refusal on the prejudice of the public against rehabilitating a man who had become rich in the traffic of slaves. Towards the middle of the summer it became evident that General Gordon was shut up in Khartum, being

slowly starved out by the Mahdi, and that a relief expedition would have to be sent. But it was not until the end of August that Lord Wolseley started in command of the expedition, only to arrive too late. There is no need to go over the painful details of the story of the hero's death. Few tragedies that the Empire has witnessed have moved the British people to more poignant emotion than the fate of General Gordon at his lonely post of duty. Khartum fell on January 26, 1885, when Gordon was ruthlessly slain.

During the year the evacuation of the country was carried out by Lord Wolseley. Several defeats were inflicted on the Mahdi (who died in June) and on his successor, the Khalifa Abdullah, with the result that there was, for a time, little fear of a serious invasion of Egypt by the dervishes. The Egyptian troops were withdrawn to Wadi Halfa and the British to Assouan.

The dervishes, however, continued to give trouble on the frontiers during the subsequent years. They were defeated by British and Egyptian troops at Suakin, where they had concentrated under Osman Digna, who held the Eastern Sudan for the Mahdists ; at Toski, on the Nile, where Wad-el-Nejumi, another intrepid leader of the Mahdists, was defeated and killed (August 1889). In February 1891, in the Eastern Sudan, Osman Digna was once more defeated, and Tokar was reoccupied by Egypt.

By this time the Egyptian troops were acquitting themselves considerably better than they had done a few years previously, having improved in *morale* under British training.

Egypt's former Sudan territory was now left to the dervishes and the slave-hunters—but not entirely. Italy occupied Massowah, to the intense indignation of the Sultan of Turkey, who had been in possession of the territory and had leased it to Ismail Pasha. Zeyla had also formed part of the Ottoman dominions and had also been leased to Egypt. The Sultan was requested to resume responsibility for garrisoning the district, but, as he did not do so, Zeyla fell to the British. The French annexed Tajourrah and King Menelik took possession of Harrar.

CHAPTER XIV

WHO ARE THE SUDANESE ?

THE Egyptians proclaim their country's unity with the Sudan and talk about their "brothers the Sudanese." It is a very fine political battle-cry, but is as empty of truth as are many other fine-sounding phrases used in political warfare. But it serves its turn. Within the wide borders of the Sudan there are not only ethnological groups totally different from the Egyptians, but there are at least 200 tribes, each of which speaks several dialects of its own language. Arabic, the language of Egypt and of the Arabs of the Sudan, is as unknown in some of the vast provinces of the country as English.

At the southern limit of the Sudan there are high lands (the watershed of the Nile), continuing southwards into Uganda, the Congo, and French Equatorial Africa. Here the people are vigorous negroes, very different from the cattle-owning tribes found a little farther north in a vast belt of swampy country extending from Abyssinia to French Equatorial Africa. Here dwell the Dinkas and the Annuak and Nuer tribes, who are all

entirely uncivilised. Their marshes have not even been penetrated by the cattle-owning or Baggara tribes of Arabs, who are found, however, between latitudes of 10° and 13° , the home of the warlike Shilluk, on the White Nile, and the Nuba, south of Kordofan, and certain negroid people. As we travel north we begin to get evidences of the Arab penetration of the northern Sudan. The central districts were at one time peopled by negroes—Libyans to the west, Nubians (Barabra) in the Nile Valley, and the Beja (Hamitic tribes) to the east. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the great Arab influx took place. They overran Dongola, and passed southwards and westwards into Kordofan and Darfur, and south-eastwards into the districts lying between Abyssinia and the Blue Nile. Those who settled on the Nile banks devoted themselves to raising crops and trading, while the others wandered about seeking pasturage for their flocks and herds. They brought with them their religion, Mohammedanism, and by conversions and intermarriage with the natives gradually extended their power. The Fung Kingdom, which had its most important centre in the district of Sennar, was the outcome of an alliance between these Arabs and the Fung negroes. Its sway extended at one time from Abyssinia, on the east, to Central Kordofan and the Nuba mountains on the west, and 250 years passed before its final

disintegration. Approaching the junction of the Blue and White Niles, where there is abundant pasturage, is found a mixed race of Arab and negroid descent, speaking Arabic and holding nominally to the Mohammedan religion, but with a considerable streak of negro practices in its social customs. Above the junction of the Blue and White Niles, on the banks of the river, we find another mixed race of Arabs, Nubian and negro origin. Away from the river, where the land is stony desert, with patches of vegetation springing up during the rains, are the Kabadish Arabs to the west, and the Bisharin (of Hamitic descent) and the Hudendoa (Fuzzy-Wuzzies) to the east—all pastoral tribes.

Mr. Edward Grove, who has had practical administrative experience of the Southern Sudan, has recently drawn a vivid picture of the people among whom he has lived, which not only gives us an idea of the tremendous moral responsibility laid upon the British nation for the future welfare of the people of the Sudan, but incidentally shows the affectionate devotion of the Sudan official for those in his charge. And this in turn furnishes an explanation of the achievements of the Sudan Government in a short span of twenty-five years.

"Few people," says Mr. Grove,¹ "in this country realise that the Sudan is, in reality, two absolutely

¹ *The Times*, August 28, 1924.

separate countries, differing from each other fundamentally in race, religion, climate, and language. From Cairo to Khartum the differences encountered are roughly the equivalent of the differences encountered in a journey through Europe. . . .

"A few hundred miles south of Khartum, however, and all this, that is so well known, changes as suddenly and completely as a scene in a theatre changes from England to China. You are in a country as utterly different from Egypt and the north as Egypt is from England. The desert ends. And in its place there is a vast country of forest and grass and swamp. The Arabic-speaking Mohammedan of the Nile Valley gives place to a naked black savage, who does not understand Arabic and who does not know what Mohammedanism is. His religion is a mixture of magic and ancestor-worship. He wears no clothes. His weapons are spears and shields. Even his cultivation, which is dependent on rainfall, is totally different from the irrigated cultivation of the north. His languages—for there are scores of languages in this country—differ from Arabic as completely as Arabic differs from English. They belong to different language families. They have not even the resemblance that German has to English. It is almost impossible for anyone who does not know this country to realise how primitive and

remote from civilisation its people are. Yet it is only by such realisation that it can be seen how grotesque the application of even the simplest of modern political criteria and methods to such a people would be. . . .

"A large number of the people in the district believed that the white man was cold-blooded like a fish, and that the reason his skin was such a peculiar colour was that his true home was under water. Not one soul in my district knew the difference between an Englishman and an Egyptian. We were all just 'red men.' Not only had they never heard of England, they had never heard of Egypt either. . . .

"Had they been asked whether they would prefer to be ruled by England or Egypt, they would have replied that they did not know there was any difference. Politics and empires mean nothing to them. They are incapable of understanding what the words mean. The only thing that matters to them is the personal character of the man who administers their district, and it is in this fact that the whole weight of our moral responsibility lies.

"The Egyptian does not regard the primitive black as a human being at all. He calls all the inhabitants of this country the 'Abid,' which is the plural of *abd*, a slave. Even under British rule there have been appalling cases of cruelty and

tyranny on the part of Egyptian officials who were temporarily freed from British supervision. The Egyptian for the last hundred years has regarded the Sudan as a place of exile, and even under the present régime I have never met an Egyptian official who made the slightest attempt to understand the people whom he was supposed to govern, or to learn their language. . . .

"The only hope for the country would be that the soft, pleasure-loving Egyptian would never face its hardships, and would just leave it alone. Unfortunately, however, it is rich in two valuable commodities—slaves and ivory. Even under the present rule the inspectors of outlying districts have a constant struggle with the bands of Abyssinian ivory- and slave-hunters, who are constantly trying to raid the country. The wild 'No-man's-land' on the borders of Abyssinia is the meeting-ground of all the desperate characters of the East; Swahilis, Beluchis, Persians, Somalis, and outcast Europeans form camps there for the sole purpose of raiding the slaves and ivory of the Sudan. They come down in armed bands, often 200 or 300 strong, and it is with the greatest difficulty that the enormous frontier can be protected. . . .

"If I have spoken strongly on the subject, it is because I, in common with all Englishmen who have hunted with, lived with, and ruled these people, have the very strongest personal affection

for them. They are simple, brave, affectionate, and childlike. I know that all those whose job it has been to protect these people from famine and bloodshed and slavery, and who have come to love them in the process, have the same feeling of personal horror at any prospect of abandoning them."

I make no apology for quoting at such length from Mr. Groves' letter, as I believe he wrote it with the sole object of getting the facts he gives as widely known as possible.

CHAPTER XV

PRESENT POSITION : THE CONDOMINIUM

It is important that there should be no misconceptions regarding the present status of the Sudan. After the reconquest steps were taken immediately to establish and maintain a Government which should reintroduce civilisation to those parts of the country where what there had been of it had been stamped out by Mahdism, and gradually to wean the whole country from barbarism.

Those who were concerned in bringing about the "severe shrinkage" which Egyptian territory had undergone, to use Lord Cromer's expression, never forgot that the Sudan would have to be won back. But for military and financial reasons the great Pro-Consul steadfastly gave the advice that the day should be postponed. He, himself, thought a generation at least should elapse before an offensive was undertaken, but actually Dongola and Berber were reoccupied twelve years after they were abandoned, and Khartoum a year later. During the interval British officers had been training Egyptian troops, who responded in such a manner as to lead to confidence being placed in

the Egyptian Army, and in the meantime Egypt had become solvent.

The question of building a huge reservoir which would hold up the Nile water and increase the area under irrigation, on the one hand, and the Italian war with Abyssinia on the other, were responsible for the reconquest being undertaken sooner than Lord Cromer had thought possible. It had been decided practically that the reservoir would have to be constructed first, and the reconquest of the Sudan left until the improvement in revenue, which the increased water-supply would bring to Egypt, should be sufficient to enable the Treasury to equip an army to win back the lost territory. But just at that point the Italians were defeated at Adua by King Menelek's forces.

This, Lord Cromer tells us in *Modern Egypt*, brought matters to a crisis. The Italian Ambassador in London was instructed by his Government to press for a diversion to be made in Italian interests. On March 12 the British Government decided suddenly on the reoccupation of Dongola. Then came the interesting episode created by the question of who was to pay for the reconquest of this province. The British Government had decided that, as this was an Egyptian interest, Egypt should pay. A sum of money from the General Reserve Fund was applied for and granted by a vote of four out of the six Commissioners of the

Public Debt. The other two, the French and Russian members, thereupon sued the Egyptian Government in the Mixed Tribunal at Cairo, and the judges ordered the Government to return the money. The case was taken to the Appeal Court at Alexandria, and the judgment of the Court of First Instance was confirmed. The "race against bankruptcy" had so far progressed that the Egyptian Treasury was able to refund this sum at once to the Commissioners of the Debt, and an arrangement was come to with the British Government for the loan of £800,000 at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., wherewith the military undertaking could be carried on.

British and Egyptian troops and ten battalions of Sudanese fought side by side, while a force of about 2,500 Indian troops did garrison work at Suakin. The Egyptian soldiers acquitted themselves in a manner which threw credit on the training they had received at the hands of British officers, and wiped out their former inglorious conduct in the Sudan and at Tel-el-Kebir. Sir Herbert Kitchener, in two campaigns, with only just sufficient troops and at a comparatively small cost, brought a victorious army to Khartum, where the British and Egyptian flags were hoisted on September 4, 1898, on the ruins of the building where Gordon fell. The Khalifa, the Mahdi's successor, who had escaped after the battle of Omdurman,

was killed the following year. Mahdism, which had held the Sudan for so many years, was destroyed, and the country was reopened for trade.

The cost of the campaigns was £E.2,354,000, of which £E.1,200,000 was spent on railways and telegraphs. The British share of this amounted to nearly £E.800,000, while the Egyptian treasury furnished the remaining £E.1,554,000.

THE CONDOMINIUM

No one can be a better guide to an understanding of the peculiar agreement made for the settlement and future government of the newly conquered territories than Lord Cromer, for it was he who was largely responsible for the anomalous arrangement—"the child of opportunism"—whereby a large territory held by a feudatory of another ruler (the Sultan of Turkey) was disposed of without in any way consulting that ruler. The following is Lord Cromer's account :

"The facts were plain enough. Fifteen years previously Egyptian misgovernment had led to a successful rebellion in the Sudan. British rule had developed the military and financial resources of Egypt to such an extent as to justify the adoption of a policy of reconquest. But England, not Egypt, had in reality reconquered the country. It is true that the Egyptian Treasury had borne

the greater portion of the cost, and that Egyptian troops, officered, however, by Englishmen, had taken a very honourable part in the campaign. But, alike during the period of the preparation and of the execution of the policy, the guiding hand had been that of England. It is absurd to suppose that without British assistance in the form of men, money, and general guidance the Egyptian Government could have reconquered the Sudan.

“From this point of view, therefore, the annexation of the reconquered territories by England would have been partially justifiable. There were, however, some weighty arguments against the adoption of this course.

“In the first place, although in the Anglo-Egyptian partnership England was unquestionably the senior partner, at the same time Egypt had played a very useful and honourable, albeit auxiliary, part in the joint undertaking. It would have been very unjust to ignore Egyptian claims in deciding on the future political status of the Sudan.

“In the second place, the campaign had throughout been carried on in the name of the Khedive. If, immediately on its conclusion, decisive action had been taken in the name of the British Government acting alone, the adoption of such a course would have involved a brusque

and objectionable departure from the policy heretofore pursued.

“ In the third place—and this consideration would, by itself, have been conclusive—it was not in the interests of Great Britain to add to its responsibilities, which were already world-wide, by assuming the direct government of another huge African territory.

“ These and other considerations, on which it is unnecessary to dwell, pointed to the conclusion that the Sudan should be regarded as Ottoman territory, and that, therefore, it should be governed, in accordance with the terms of the Imperial Firmas, by the Sultan's feudatory, the Khedive.”

The objection to the adoption of this course, Lord Cromer explains, was that the Sudan administration would then have been burdened by the Capitulations, “ all the cumbersome paraphernalia of internationalism,” which had done so much to retard Egyptian progress.

“ It was manifestly absurd,” he continues, “ that British lives should be sacrificed and British treasure expended merely in order to place additional arms in the hands of Powers, some one or other of whom might at some future time become the enemy of England. Moreover, the adoption of this course would have been

highly detrimental to Egyptian interests. Egypt, more than England, had suffered from the International incubus.¹

"Hence there arose a dilemma. . . .

"In the first place, it was essential that British influence should in practice be paramount in the Sudan, in order that the Egyptians should not have conferred on them a 'bastard freedom' to repeat the misgovernment of the past.

"In the second place, British influence could not be exerted under the same ill-defined and anomalous conditions as those which prevailed in Egypt without involving the introduction of the baneful régime of Internationalism.¹

"In the third place, annexation by England, which would have cut the international knot, was precluded on grounds of equity and policy.

"It was therefore necessary to invent some method by which the Sudan should be, at one and the same time, Egyptian to such an extent as to satisfy equitable and political exigencies, and yet sufficiently British to prevent the administration of the country from being hampered by the international burr which necessarily hung on to the skirts of Egyptian political existence.

"It was manifest that these conflicting requirements could not be satisfied without some hybrid

¹ The Capitulations are, of course, referred to here.

form of government hitherto unknown to international jurisprudence.

" . . . On January 4, 1899, being then at Omdurman, I made a speech to the assembled sheikhs. As I intended and anticipated, it attracted much attention. It was indeed meant for the public of Egypt and Europe quite as much as for the audience whom I addressed. In the course of this speech I said : ' You see that both the British and Egyptian flags are floating over this house. That is an indication that for the future you will be governed by the Queen of England and by the Khedive of Egypt.' "

The agreement embodying the method invented was prepared by the Judicial Adviser to the Egyptian Government, Sir Malcolm McIlwraith, under Lord Cromer's instructions, and was signed by the Egyptian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Lord Cromer on January 19, 1899.

The publication of this agreement astonished diplomats, and naturally annoyed the Sultan of Turkey. But " the splutter of amazement," to use Lord Cromer's phrase, soon died out. No European Power was prepared to support the Sultan in his protests or to risk a quarrel with Great Britain on the ground that the agreement was something new in diplomacy. Besides, the fact that Article VI. laid down that trade in the Sudan was free to all

nationalities and Great Britain claimed no special privileges acted in a soothing manner upon outraged feelings.

THE ANGLO-EGYPTIAN CONVENTION OF 1899

AGREEMENT between HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT and the GOVERNMENT OF HIS HIGHNESS THE KHEDEVE OF EGYPT, relative to the future administration of the Sudan.

WHEREAS certain provinces in the Sudan which were in rebellion against the authority of His Highness have now been reconquered by the joint military and financial efforts of Her Britannic Majesty's Government and the Government of His Highness the Khedive ;

AND WHEREAS it has become necessary to decide upon a system for the administration of and for the making of laws for the said reconquered provinces, under which due allowance may be made for the backward and unsettled condition of large portions thereof, and for the varying requirements of different localities ;

AND WHEREAS it is desired to give effect to the claims which have accrued to Her Britannic Majesty's Government, by right of conquest, to share in the present settlement and future working and development of the said system of administration and legislation ;

AND WHEREAS it is conceived that for many purposes Wadi Halfa and Suakin may be most effectively administered in conjunction with the reconquered provinces to which they are respectively adjacent ;

NOW, IT IS HEREBY AGREED AND DECLARED by and between the undersigned, duly authorised for that purpose, as follows :

ARTICLE I.

The word " Sudan " in this agreement means all the territories south of the 22nd parallel of latitude, which—

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1. Have never been evacuated by Egyptian troops since the year 1882 ; or
2. Which, having before the late rebellion been administered by the Government of His Highness the Khedive, were temporarily lost to Egypt, and have been reconquered by Her Majesty's Government and the Egyptian Government, acting in concert ; or
3. Which may hereafter be reconquered by the two Governments acting in concert.

ARTICLE II.

The British and Egyptian flags shall be used together, both on land and water, throughout the Sudan, except in the town of Suakin, in which locality the Egyptian flag alone shall be used.

ARTICLE III.

The supreme military and civil command of the Sudan shall be vested in one officer, termed the " Governor-General of the Sudan." He shall be appointed by Khedival Decree on the recommendation of Her Britannic Majesty's Government, and shall be removed only by Khedival Decree, with the consent of Her Britannic Majesty's Government.

ARTICLE IV.

Laws, as also orders and regulations with the full force of law, for the good government of the Sudan, and for regulating the holding, disposal, and devolution of property of every kind therein situate, may from time to time be made, altered, or abrogated by Proclamation of the Governor-General. Such laws, orders, and regulations may apply to the whole or any named part of the Sudan, and may, either explicitly or by necessary implication, alter or abrogate any existing law or regulation.

All such Proclamations shall be forthwith notified to Her Britannic Majesty's Agent and Consul General in Cairo, and to the President of the Council of Ministers of His Highness the Khedive.

ARTICLE V.

No Egyptian law, decree, ministerial arrêté, or other enactment hereafter to be made or promulgated shall apply to the Sudan or any part thereof, save in so far as the same shall be applied by Proclamation of the Governor-General in manner hereinbefore provided.

ARTICLE VI.

In the definition by Proclamation of the conditions under which Europeans, of whatever nationality, shall be at liberty to trade with or reside in the Sudan, or to hold property within its limits, no special privileges shall be accorded to the subjects of any one or more Power.

ARTICLE VII.

Import duties on entering the Sudan shall not be payable on goods coming from Egyptian territory. Such duties may, however, be levied on goods coming from elsewhere than Egyptian territory, but in the case of goods entering the Sudan at Suakin, or any other port on the Red Sea littoral, they shall not exceed the corresponding duties for the time being leviable on goods entering Egypt from abroad. Duties may be levied on goods leaving the Sudan at such rates as may from time to time be prescribed by Proclamation.

ARTICLE VIII.

The jurisdiction of the Mixed Tribunals shall not extend, nor be recognised for any purpose whatsoever, in any part of the Sudan, except in the town of Suakin.

ARTICLE IX.

Until and save so far as it shall be otherwise determined by Proclamation, the Sudan with the exception of Suakin shall be and remain under martial law.

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ARTICLE X.

No Consuls, Vice-Consuls, or Consular Agents, shall be accredited in respect of nor allowed to reside in the Sudan, without the previous 'consent of Her Britannic Majesty's Government.

ARTICLE XI.

The importation of slaves into the Sudan, as also their exportation, is absolutely prohibited. Provision shall be made by Proclamation for the enforcement of this regulation.

ARTICLE XII.

It is agreed between the two Governments that special attention shall be paid to the Brussels Act of the 2nd July, 1890, in respect to the import, sale, and manufacture of firearms and their munitions, and distilled, or spirituous liquors.

Done in Cairo, the 19th January, 1899.

(Signed) BOUTROS GHALI.
CROMER.

The references in Articles III., VIII., and IX, to the town of Suakin were cancelled by agreement six months afterwards.

The Ministry of Finance in Cairo, by the Financial Regulations made in 1899, 1901, and 1910, has at all times the right of supervision, audit, or inspection of the whole of the financial arrangements of the Sudan. The budget for each year has to be submitted to the Ministry of Finance for submission to the Council of Ministers. No grants of special credit can be made, whether out of current
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revenue or out of the Sudan Reserve Fund, without the previous approval of the Ministry of Finance, and no new taxes can be imposed, nor any existing tax altered, nor any measure adopted which is calculated to reduce the revenue of the Sudan Government without the approval of the same Ministry. And in several other matters relating to increased expenditure for which provision has not been made the Ministry of Finance acts as a brake, inasmuch as its approval must be obtained before any extra expenditure may be incurred.

CHAPTER XVI

THE ARTS OF PEACE : WORK !

THE relationships of Western peoples towards less advanced races have undergone a remarkable change during the last three-quarters of a century. First of all came the revolt in the Western mind against the principle of holding slaves, and since then the duty of civilised nations towards subject peoples has become part of the recognised ethical system among the powerful nations. The mandatory system has taken the place of the former incontestable right to occupy and govern nations as a result of conquest. We may take it that conditions such as those which obtained in the Sudan and led to the rebellion under the Mahdi, or the kind of rule which brought about the exposure of the Congo atrocities, the New Hebrides abuses, and other glaring examples of misrule—the misuse by Western nations of their power over primitive races—will never again be allowed to remain for a moment unchallenged. Even the subtler forms of exploitation are watched with lynx eyes, not only by the people of humane sentiments, who believe that Western civilisation is at

bottom imbued with the altruistic spirit that some writers, like the late Benjamin Kidd, claim for it, but also by those who see only the rule of the jungle (or capitalism) in everything civilised beings or nations attempt. Whichever of the two theories thus represented we may eventually come to recognise as the true explanation of the onward march of our civilisation, no one now seriously advocates our leaving backward races alone, to progress or not as they choose. The scientist just named was undoubtedly right when he said in his *Social Evolution* : " It will probably be made clear, and that at no distant date, that the last thing our civilisation is likely to permanently tolerate is the wasting of the resources of the richest regions of the earth through the lack of the elementary qualities of social efficiency in the races possessing them. The right of those races to remain in possession will be recognised ; but it will in all probability be no part of the future conditions of such recognition that they shall be allowed to prevent the utilisation of the immense natural resources which they have in charge. At no remote date, with the means at the disposal of our civilisation, the development of these resources must become one of the most pressing and vital questions engaging the attention of the Western races."

We are bound, then, to go on civilising the

uncivilised, but what, we may ask, does our civilisation mean to the various peoples and tribes that inhabit the Sudan? Nothing can, of course, measure the inestimable blessing brought to them since they came under British control by the cessation of the terrible cruelties of the "razzias," or slave-drives, and the introduction of the arts of peace where before only savage warfare and cattle stealing filled their days. But civilisation places a burden upon the individual and upon society to which the savage does not always take kindly. A missionary to some very primitive tribes in the southern Sudan told me that these people could not understand what inducement the missionaries had to leave the wonders they said they enjoyed in their own country—houses, streets, railways, telegraphs, flying machines, and other remarkable things unknown to these naked savages. They were half inclined to doubt the truth of the missionaries' statements, and asked bluntly: "If you have these things in your country, why do you come here?"

The missionary certainly goes out with a single heart to spread his good news, but the net result of both his labours and that of civilising governments upon the lives of any simple people is that gradually all their toil will be turned from cultivation just to satisfy their needs to cultivating in order that they may live from the *profits* of their

labour. And the Sudanese has had to be roused to the desirability of working more regularly than he, in his simplicity, thought necessary. Were he able to express himself, he might do so in the words of Edward Carpenter, who says in *England's Ideal* (p. 112): "When I am working for use, when I am hoeing potatoes and thinking of them only as food—thinking how somebody will eat them, at any rate—and studying how to grow them best for that purpose, then I have an assured good before me which no one can take away. Whatever their *price*, these potatoes will feed the same number of human beings. I feel calm and contentful, and can take pleasure in my work. But when I am working for the market, when the profit and the gain which I am to derive from the sale of my potatoes is the main object before me; when I am considering all along whether each thrust of the hoe will *pay*; whether I had not better scamp this or hurry over that in view of the falling prices; when I see that the whole end and purpose of my labour is involved in doubt owing to trade fluctuations which I cannot possibly foresee—then—how can it be otherwise?—I am miserable and feverish, grudging every stroke of the tool in my hand, each effort of the muscles, tossed about by uncertainty, wavering in my plans, and devoid of that good heart which alone is the basis of all good work."

Whether the objection to being civilised arises from such a feeling or not, certain it is that one of the difficulties encountered by the authorities in bringing the Sudan into good order, and developing its resources for the purpose of maintaining that good order, has been the difficulty of finding a steady supply of labour. While some provinces made progress in this respect, others were very slow to come into line. For instance, nearly ten years after the reconquest we find the Governor of Bahr-el-Ghazal Province writing: "One of the chief difficulties in the way of progress in this province is the absence of unskilled labour. The natives are, for the most part, so slightly removed from savagery that they have no wants. Their sheep, cattle, and patches of cultivation provide them practically with all they need, and they cannot see the object of working." The same report in which this statement occurs [Egypt, No. 1 (1909)] contains quite other news about the people of Sennar: "Each year one sees signs of greater prosperity. Cattle, sheep, and goats are all increasing rapidly in numbers, and trade has grown in all local markets. . . . More than sufficient labour is always forthcoming for any work required." The year before the report of the Governor of Berber Province was as follows: "The population is still very scanty, and over one-third of the cultivable land lies fallow. Cultivators are attracted away by the high

wages offered for labour on Government or private enterprises. Moreover, the natives, while thrifty, sober, and moral, and giving little trouble, are disinclined to work, although ready enough to make their children, who appear to be rapidly increasing in numbers, do so for them." In Mongalla at the same time the report ran: "Short of putting a man to work under the eye of a policeman, there seems to be no way of getting regular steady work out of any of these people. They come and ask for work now and then, but, after a day or two of the lightest employment at a good wage, they go off to loiter about their villages again."

In Egypt, No. 1 (1910), we find, among other interesting matter, the governors' reports for the previous year for the Upper Nile and White Nile Provinces. The former contains the following:

Upper Nile Province.—"In the northern parts of this province the tribes show signs of becoming somewhat more civilised every year, but this cannot be said to be the case with the Sobat and Khor Filus Dinkas or the Nuers. These people are well off from their own point of view, as they possess cattle, and their crops are sufficient for their needs, and they are intolerant of any attempt to raise them in the human scale. South of the 12th parallel clothing is a superfluity, and the young warriors of the negroid tribes are satisfied to lead a wild and turbulent life. As an illustration of Dinka

character, Mr. Struve narrates the following incident which recently took place in a tribal court of justice : One Dinka stole ten bulls from another ; a court was held, the robber acknowledged his theft, and the cattle were ordered to be returned ; not only, however, was the robber not punished, but the court decided that, since he had been to all the trouble and risk of stealing the cattle for nothing, he should keep one of the bulls as compensation. Probably there was not one of the assembled judges who had not at some time attempted to steal a neighbour's cattle. An English inspector, who orders restoration of all captured cattle and fines the thief, may as often as not be looked upon as a brutal innovator."

With the establishment of order and peaceful conditions and the consequent increase of population, the shortage of labour almost ceased to be felt. But when a great work of public utility was undertaken, such as the building of the dam at Makwar, requiring many hundreds of extra labourers, the lack of labour once more became apparent, and labourers had to be imported, with, however, not the best results for the peace of the neighbourhood.

The latest report [Sudan, No. 2 (1923)] from Sir Lee Stack, the Governor-General, states : " There have been no difficulties during the year in regard to shortage of labour, nor has the cultivating season

been characterised by such large seasonal increases in rates of wages as are usual. The wages of unskilled labour in the northern and central parts of the country has been about P.T. 4 to P.T. 6 (10*d.* to 15*d.*). There has, in fact, been a considerable surplus of labour in parts of the country, but although, as shown by trade statistics, the purchasing power of the native population has declined, there have been no signs of hardship.”⁴

As for the conditions under which the people live, it is doubtful if anything so revolting as those which obtain in the slums of the so-called great cities are to be found among primitive tribes. A Bedouin tent can be pretty foul on a winter night, when the goats and fowls and human beings are all crowded into it, but it is decidedly healthier than a crowded room in a city, and I have seen girls and women wither away like flowers when taken from their tent life to a room in a village, and blossom once more into health when restored to their nomad existence. There is said to be overcrowding in the mushroom villages of the work-people who are employed in the construction of the dam at Makwar. The situation is, however, probably saved for them by the fact that their “houses” are built of sticks covered by maize straw. Were they made to inhabit stone or mud huts of the same size—about five yards square—there would

⁴ See page 331.

probably be greater danger to health than there is at present from the crowding together of a man and his wife (or wives) and children and their domestic animals, possibly even their donkey, under one roof. Perhaps it is because of the prevalence of sunshine, and the opportunity it gives to the people to live out-of-doors, even in cities, in Egypt and the Sudan, that one does not feel in the slummiest native quarters—and they can be very slummy—the desolation of heart created by, say, the slums of London or the back-to-back dwellings in the courts of West Birmingham. Henry George once declared he would deliberately choose the lot of the savage rather than that of the lowest class in such a highly civilised country as Britain. What would he say to-day? He would marvel that, whereas in the Sudan, at all events, the native is in a more hopeful condition than he was when that statement was made, the post-war British working man is, in many respects, in a worse plight than ever, particularly in regard to overcrowding due to housing shortage.

CHAPTER XVII

DEVELOPMENT AND THE COTTON QUESTION

It will have been seen in the foregoing that one of the things which a civilised Government is doing for the Sudanese is to rouse them to the necessity to work, and to work regularly. In no other way can the Government be provided with funds which are needed, not only to ensure the maintenance of peaceful conditions, but to provide communications, to spread education, lessen disease.

For fourteen years after the reconquest the Egyptian Government contributed an annual sum to the Sudan Government in order to enable the latter to balance its budget. In 1900 the Egyptian Government's contribution was £E. 457,892, out of which £E. 282,862 was returned to the Egyptian Government for maintenance of the Egyptian Army in the Sudan. The revenue of the country was then £E. 156,888, the expenditure £E. 331,918. The amount received from Egypt decreased each year, until in 1912 it amounted to £E. 335,000; meanwhile the revenue was increasing. In addition to the annual subvention, the Egyptian

Government advanced money to the Sudan for development schemes, for which interest at 3 per cent. was paid. Egypt recouped herself to some extent by collecting at Egyptian ports customs due on goods destined for, or coming from, the Sudan. In 1913 the contribution from Egypt ceased, and an arrangement was made for the Sudan to receive the amount paid at Egyptian ports as Customs dues on Sudan imports and exports. Egypt has assisted the Sudan since the reconquest to the amount of £E. 5,198,700. Since 1913 the Sudan has been able to balance its budget without outside help, though Egypt until 1923 contributed £E. 23,000 annually towards the repression of the slave-trade.

The state of the people after the ruin wrought by Mahdism was such that no Government could expect to raise sufficient revenues by means of taxation, even with the help Egypt was granting. The Government, therefore, made very successful experiments in State enterprise, and to-day obtains revenue from its ownership of the railways, steamers, trams, posts, telegraphs, the Port Sudan dock, catering on railways and steamers, in addition to its receipts from the Customs.

It was obvious that, although it paid Egypt to grant a subsidy to the Sudan Government in return for peace on her borders and the control of the Nile, she could not be expected to continue to nurse

the country financially for an indefinite period. When, therefore, the subsidy was withdrawn in 1913, a loan was guaranteed by the British Government, to be expended in the development of the potentialities of the Sudan as a cotton-growing country.

Cotton-growing on an extensive scale in Egypt is a modern development, Mohammed Ali having introduced the plant for commercial purposes into the country. But it has been commercially important in the Sudan for hundreds of years. In a report published in 1913 on *Land Settlement of the Gezira*, Judge H. St. G. Peacock wrote: "Monsieur Poncet, who visited Sennar in 1699 with Father Xaverius de Brevedent, found there a population of nearly a hundred thousand and a very considerable trade. So important was the export of cotton that the Sultan, by consent of the King of Æthiopia, kept an Officer of Customs at Chelga to receive the duties on cotton which was brought into Æthiopia. The duties were equally divided between the two princes." He stated further that "Merchants of Sennar have a great trade towards the east; at the time of the monsoon they embark at Suaqem (Suakin) on the Red Sea. They pass from thence to Moka . . . whence they proceed to Surate, to which place they carry gold, civet and elephants' teeth, and bring from thence spices and other merchandise of

the Indies. They commonly spend not less than two years in making that voyage."

The archaeologist Burckhardt, who travelled in 1814 up the Nile, also mentioned the trade in "damur," the cotton cloth woven by the Sudanese, as being exported in large quantities from Sennar and as being in use, not only along the banks of the Nile as far as Dongola, but also in Kordofan, Darfur, and throughout the whole of Nubia east of the Nile as far as the Red Sea. The same writer also states that the cotton manufactories of Sennar and Bazerme, on the west of Darfur, furnished the greater part of North Africa with articles of dress. In the time of Said Pasha, the Khedive Ismail's predecessor, cotton-seed from Egypt was sent up to the Sudan for trial, and some of this was planted in the Gezira, on the White Nile, at a place named El Getaina (from the Arabic word *gwn*, cotton). During the rule of the Mahdi cotton continued to be grown in the Gezira, and taxes were paid in the form of bundles of damur from this neighbourhood, but with the dwindling of the population under Mahdism this trade, like everything else, suffered, and became almost extinct. After the reconquest, the gradual recovery of the Sudan led to experiments being made under Government in cotton-growing. Tokar benefited rapidly from the introduction of Mit Afifi cotton and a more scientific method of cultivation.

In 1910 the Sudan plantations Syndicate began experiments on behalf of the Government at Tayiba, in the Gezira plain, the land being irrigated from the Blue Nile by pumps. The cotton thus grown was pronounced by experts to be superior to that grown in Egypt, and to be exactly what was needed for Lancashire spinners. All that was required, therefore, was irrigation, the soil being perfect for the purpose. These facts were placed before the British Government by Lord Kitchener, with the result that Parliament guaranteed to the Sudan Government the loan of £3,000,000 referred to above, but, owing to the outbreak of the Great War, the loan was not raised, though the work was begun in anticipation. By 1919 it was found that, owing to the jump in prices, the amount would have to be increased if the works contemplated were to be carried out. It was, therefore, increased to £6,000,000. But even this was not enough, and a further £3,500,000 was added in 1922, while at the beginning of 1924 further guarantees brought the total up to £13,000,000.

This new agricultural development does not, as some imagine, introduce a new production into the Sudan, but improves upon and extends a speciality on which part of the country depended at one time to pay its taxes. The new product, unlike the old, will benefit by the latest scientific discoveries in connection with cotton cultivation,

and, eventually, the Makwar dam should be the means of increasing the standard of living of the people of the Gezira, who are at present subject to seasons of great distress and not infrequent famines when their rainfall fails.

CHAPTER XVIII

" IT IS THE WATER "

DURING a visit to Khartum and Omdurman in February 1923 I asked a native of the latter town how he liked the idea of the Egyptians coming to take over the Government which they were claiming as their right. He grinned, and made the motion of holding and pointing a gun, saying: " We are ready for them like this." I was surprised, because, for all I knew, he might have been anxious for a change of Government. I therefore asked him why he did not want the Egyptians to come and rule the Sudan. With many gestures he described what would probably happen to a man like himself—a silver merchant—if he had only Egyptian officials over him. Put shortly, he declared he was fairly treated by the British and *he was ready to fight the Egyptians if they came!*

The next day I had the opportunity of talking to an Egyptian who had been for eighteen years a teacher at Gordon College, Khartum. I asked him how he liked the Sudan. He did not like it at all, he said. Yet he admitted that he had his wife and family with him, and was not exiled from his

kith and kin as were so many of the British officials.

Upon my remarking that no Egyptian seemed to like the Sudan, he said, “ That is so.”

“ Well, then, how is it that the Egyptians, who do not like the Sudan, want to drive out the British and take over the Government? Why do they bother about it? ”

“ It is the water,” was his reply.

“ The Nile is Egypt and Egypt is the Nile,” is one of the shibboleths of the Egyptian politicians. The Nile makes Egypt, undoubtedly ; for without it there would be nothing to distinguish it from the Sahara ; and all that ancient civilisation which archæologists have taken, and are taking, such pains to bring to light, would never have existed.

Until recent years Egyptians took their water supply for granted. It never occurred to any one of them that, though the Nile is Egypt, Egypt is not the whole Nile ; that the Nile might belong equally to other people, and that they could not claim any monopoly of the water supply ; nor did they apparently ever speculate what would have happened to them had an intelligent people lived nearer to the sources of the Nile and made full use of its waters for themselves, only allowing what they did not want to be carried away through Egypt to the sea. Even then Egypt would have had water, but the expansion of her cultivable area would have been limited to the amount of water

that could be stored within her own borders, and such projects as those known as the Nile Control Schemes, already begun, which provide for the "harnessing" of the river more than three thousand miles away from its Egyptian mouths, amid a foreign people, would have been impossible.

To-day, although the people of the Sudan are about to enjoy an increased use of their water for the first time by means of great irrigation works—thanks to the fact that the men who planned the controlling of the Nile put the interests of Egypt first and foremost, and also to the fact that the Governments of the Sudan and of Uganda are well disposed towards the Egyptians—the use to be made of the water at the sources and the middle courses of the Nile is to be strictly limited to schemes that will not interfere with Egypt's needs. But this does not satisfy the Egyptian politicians. They steadily refuse to recognise the equal rights of the Sudan to the water which flows through it. They have rejected the proposal for a Nile Board (the Milner Mission's proposal) on which Egypt should be fully represented, together with the Sudan and Uganda. They demand the sole control of the Nile and the Government of the Sudan.

Apart from the need for her water supply to be secured, there is a very noisy side of the agitation for Egypt's "right" to govern the Sudan, which bases its claim upon Mohammed Ali's conquest of

part of the country and Ismail's subsequent extension southward of the territory. But the advocates of the rights of the conqueror find it convenient to forget that the Sudanese made a successful revolt against Egyptian rule, and without a shadow of doubt would have also overrun Egypt itself had they not been held back by British troops and by Egyptian soldiers under British officers.

It is not surprising that Egyptians are making arrogant claims. Owing to the comparative ease with which they have got rid of the British Administration, and have seen their country become an independent kingdom instead of a mere dependency of the Turkish Empire, they are quite unmindful of the chief lesson of their own past history, namely, that increase of territory does not necessarily bring with it ability to rule and keep enlarged dominions. Instead of bending their energies to getting Egypt firmly on her feet as a self-governing nation, they seem determined to enmesh themselves in the task of administering a colossal territory (for the Sudan is a quarter the size of Europe) for which they are equipped with neither the military strength, the financial resources, nor the governing ability.

Zaghlul Pasha makes not the slightest pretence of basing his claims to the Sudan on the question of the water supply, for he knows perfectly well that the water question is safe enough. He knows that the schemes for irrigation in the Sudan were

worked out in the Ministry of Public Works in Cairo by British officials serving under an able Egyptian engineer, Sir Ismail Sirry Pasha, the Minister of Public Works, and that the object of all the Nile Control schemes is to expand the agriculture of Egypt to its utmost limit by further utilisation of the Nile, *and at the same time develop the Sudan to such an extent as may be possible without injury to Egypt*. When these schemes were published Sirry Pasha signed the following statement with regard to them: "The projects described in the following pages are those studied by the Irrigation Service acting under Sir M. MacDonald, with whom I have many times discussed them. We jointly agreed to these projects in the form now presented, and I hope that they will in due time be approved by the Government and duly carried out" (*Nile Control*, Second Edition, vol. i., 1921).

But though the Imperialist ambitions of the newly emancipated Egyptians have an amusing as well as a serious aspect, the only feature of the agitation that practical people need trouble about is the question of the safeguarding of Egypt's water supply. Before touching upon the details of the problems involved in the further utilisation of the Nile water for Egypt and the Sudan it would be as well to take a glance at the river itself.

The Nile, from its departure from Lakes Victoria and Albert, passes almost continuously northward

through the different provinces of the Sudan, where it receives the waters of two great tributary systems—that of the Bahr-el-Ghazal on the left, and the Abyssinian rivers, the Sobat, Blue Nile, and Atbara, on the right. Below the Atbara, which enters it nearly 1,700 miles from the Mediterranean, the Nile receives no more tributaries. The Nile's great wonder is not the continuous supply of water guaranteed by the steady flow of the White Nile, which is fed from rains falling in the equatorial regions, but the " rise " or " flood " which comes down the Abyssinian rivers, bringing with it mud rich in fertilising value. So important is the flood, filling the canals and thus bringing the means of life far beyond the range of the heightened river itself, that the news of the rise of the water is waited for eagerly in Egypt, and has, from time immemorial, been connected with special ceremonies, showing the people's acknowledgment of the strange but beneficent phenomenon of the river.

The need for more water in Egypt is, of course, due to increasing population. The inhabitants of Egypt during the British occupation increased from 6,831,131 in 1882 to 12,751,000 at the last census, taken in 1917, and are estimated to be 14,000,000 to-day. The rate of increase is about 200,000 a year. Egypt being solely an agricultural country, expansion must be in the direction

of bringing under cultivation the whole of the cultivable area of the country (roughly 20,000 square miles, a portion of which is still pure desert). The total combined area of the comparatively small part of Egypt which can be reached by Nile water is 7,300,000 feddans (feddan=roughly, an acre), and of this 5,200,000 feddans are under cultivation, 1,200,000 being under the basin or annual crop system of irrigation, while the rest is perennially watered, and produces generally two annual crops. Allowing a small area for fisheries, it is judged that the maximum increase of area of cultivation in Egypt is under 2,000,000 feddans, while the productive power of the 1,200,000 feddans under basin irrigation can be doubled by conversion to the perennial system.

Lord Cromer recognised that one of the duties of Britain to Egypt was that of meeting the increasing needs of the people by expanding the cultivable area of the country. As a first means to this end an international commission, composed of Sir Benjamin Baker, Monsieur A. Boulé, and Signor G. Torricelli, was appointed in 1894 to decide upon a project for augmenting the summer water supply. They were limited in their research to the Nile region north of Wadi Halfa, as the country south of that was in the hands of the Mahdists.

The result of their report was the planning and building of the Assuan dam, completed in 1902,

by means of which a thousand million cubic metres of water could be stored at the end of the flood season, and gradually allowed to pass through the sluices as it was needed during the following summer. The heightening of the dam in 1912 doubled its storage capacity. Meanwhile an exhaustive study of the Nile and its possibilities was being carried on by Sir William Garstin, Sir Arthur Webb, Sir Benjamin Baker, and various Public Works officials, since it was apparent that the dam, enormous though its utility had proved to be, would not solve the problem of Egypt's future needs.

Lord Kitchener's arrival in Egypt as British Agent meant an all-round speeding up of works of public utility. Dealing first with drainage schemes, which had lagged sadly behind general irrigation in the Delta, the land, often as a result of over-watering, being in many places water-logged, Lord Kitchener next turned his attention to irrigation projects for Egypt, and also for the Sudan. It had already been discovered that further impounding of water, such as was done by the Assouan reservoir, could only be accomplished higher up the Nile Valley, and a commission composed of Sir Arthur Webb, Sir Murdoch MacDonald, and Mr. H. H. McClure held a consultation with Lord Kitchener in the Sudan as to which would be the best of various schemes to meet the requirements of the

two countries. It was there and then decided that what are now known as the Blue and White Nile Projects were the most suitable.

The Blue Nile Scheme was for a dam at Makwar, which would bring under perennial irrigation a large tract of land in what is known as the Gezira,¹ south of Khartum, and would benefit the Sudan, while that of the White Nile comprised a dam at Gebel Aulia, which was to serve Egypt alone. When Lord Kitchener, on the occasion referred to above, had satisfied himself as to the practicability of the Blue Nile Scheme, he authorised those concerned to proceed at once with the construction of a dam at Makwar.²

It had been calculated that at least 500,000 feddans of land could be irrigated at Gezira without interfering with Egypt's supply of water. Preliminary plans had already been prepared for the irrigation of a fifth of that amount, but finally,

¹ The "Gezira," or island, as the ancients believed it to be, is the name given to that section of the Sudan situated between the Blue and White Niles, and bounded on the south by the Abyssinian tableland and the River Sobat. The whole of this area is a vast plain, but for present purposes the Gezira plain may be described as that portion of it which lies to the north of the Sennar-Kosti railway; its length from north to south is about 250 kilometres, and the total area comprised between the railway to the south and the two rivers to their point of junction at Khartoum is about 5,000,000 feddans, of which 3,000,000 feddans may be considered as irrigable. In this tract are included the districts of Sennar, Wad Medani, Managil, Messelema, and Kamlin. (*Nile Control*, Vol. I., p. 82.)

² The British Government guaranteed a loan to the Sudan of £3,000,000 for the purpose of financing the Scheme, since increased to £13,000,000.

in order to make the game worth the candle, plans were made for the irrigation of 300,000 feddans, thus making the scheme a commercially paying proposition. It so happened that that year (1914) the summer supply of water was very low, following a very poor Nile flood in 1913 ; but this gave the engineers opportunity of proving that the irrigation of 300,000 feddans, even with such a low Nile, was possible without affecting Egypt's supply.

The 1913 flood had been an abnormally low one. There seems to have been no record of such an occurrence for something like 150 years. The question that now emerges is whether the Sudan scheme need have been restricted to 300,000 feddans, for in any ordinary year considerably more could be cultivated. The Sudanese, experts contend, might have been allowed to cultivate annually as much as they could (always providing Egypt was not affected), and only restricted in those years when the supply of water was small. It would seem, therefore, that the Sudanese might be justified in complaining, if they wished to do so, that their Government's advisers were unnecessarily limiting the Sudan's development by restricting cultivation in the Gezira to 300,000, and at the same time limiting the area to be sown with cotton to 100,000 feddans. Since then it has been proved that a good deal more cotton, perhaps half as much again,

could be watered without withholding water from Egypt. But in spite of the precautions taken in favour of Egypt, the Ministry of Public Works in Cairo which was entirely responsible for the schemes, was the object of an extraordinary amount of criticism and political baiting on this very question of the Sudan's share of the Nile at this point.

Before the war a series of allegations had been made by Sir William Willcocks, a former Public Works official, regarding the construction and the safety of the Assuan Dam, which had been proved to be absolutely false. But these allegations were as nothing compared with the vitriolic campaign that was launched in 1919 against the British officials of the Public Works Ministry on account of the new Nile projects. It began with the criticisms of Colonel Kennedy, to which were added those of Sir William Willcocks. Presently the Egyptian politicians took up the hue and cry. The attack assumed a bitter and biassed personal form, even to the alleging of the "cooking" of figures (which, even if it had been done, would have been absurd and futile) by men in responsible positions.

So great was the ferment in the public mind that the Egyptian Government appointed a mixed Commission to enquire into the allegations. These were completely refuted by the Commission, but the whole affair had a most disturbing effect upon the minds of the people, for the politicians spread the

belief that there was a plan on foot to deprive the fellaheen of their water—the most harmful of all cries to raise in a country where the whole population depends without exception upon that water supply. Particularly dangerous is such propaganda among a people of which 90 per cent. can neither read nor write, and are thus unable of themselves to form a correct judgment upon so technical a matter as that in dispute. It took two long and costly trials in the Courts, as well as the report of the Commission before the ferment caused by the criticisms of the proposed Nile works abated.

The mixed Commission was appointed in January 1920 by the Council of Ministers of the Egyptian Government (the Cabinet) for the purpose of reporting on the Nile Projects which, as I have already said, had been approved by the Egyptian Minister of Public Works. Its members were : Mr. F. St. John Gebbie (Chairman), nominated by the Government of India ; Mr. H. T. Cory, nominated by the Government of the United States of America ; and Mr. G. C. Simpson, nominated by the University of Cambridge. The terms of reference were :

“ The Commission is requested to give to the Egyptian Government its opinion on the projects prepared by the Ministry of Public Works, with a view to the further regulation of the Nile

supply for the benefit of Egypt and the Sudan. In particular the Commission is requested :

(1) To examine and report upon the physical data on which the projects are based.

(2) To report upon the propriety of the manner in which, as a result of these projects, the increased supply of available water provided by them will be allocated at each stage of development between Egypt and the Sudan.

(3) To advise as to the apportionment of the costs of the proposed works and of this inquiry as between Egypt and the Sudan."

The projects on which they had been asked to report were contained in an official work compiled by Sir Murdoch MacDonald, known as *Nile Control*, and consisted of :

(1) A White Nile dam, a reservoir destined to provide more summer water for Egypt.

(2) A Gezira Irrigation Scheme and Blue Nile (Sennar) Dam to provide for the cultivation of 300,000 feddans at Gezirs.

(3) A Nag Hamadi Barrage to be constructed in Upper Egypt, to convert 500,000 feddans from basin, or one-crop system, to the perennial or two-crop per annum system of irrigation.

(4) An Upper Blue Nile dam for the full development of Gezira, and also to benefit Egypt.

(5) The control of the Sudd region, and a dam

at Lake Albert for the development of Egypt to its fullest extent.

A very favourable report on the whole of these projects was signed by all three members of the Commission, and published at the end of 1920. Another report on the allocation of the water provided by these works was signed by Mr. Gebbie and Dr. Simpson, while Mr. Cory signed a separate report on the allocation of the water provided because he considered there was " a danger of the Sudan losing now a good opportunity of further development in the near future without prejudice to Egypt," in respect of the Gebel Aulia water (White Nile Dam). Mr. Cory also gave very clear emphatic objections to the criticisms of the projects and to a programme filed by a committee of Egyptian engineers, who appeared before the members of the Commission, and held formal and informal conferences with them.

Thus it was made clear that Sir Murdoch MacDonald, who bore the brunt of the hostile criticism and denunciation, and his colleagues had been devoted to the task of increasing Egypt's cultivable area, and time has also proved that, as officials of the Egyptian Government, Egypt's interests had been paramount to them. I had noticed this whenever I had occasion, during the early part of the controversy, to interview any of the British

officials in the Ministry of Public Works. I was always impressed by the long view they seemed to take of Egypt's water needs. They were very far removed from the Oriental, and particularly Egyptian, habit of letting the morrow look after itself. They were concerned with the Egypt of a hundred years hence! But they could not deny to the Sudan the right to expand towards further civilisation, by using its own natural resources, one of which is the Nile, and it was doubly unfortunate that, just when the agitation for political independence was gathering strength in Egypt, British critics of the administration should have launched their campaign against these officials, particularly as their criticisms were proved to have been founded upon false premises.

CHAPTER XIX

ADMINISTRATION OF THE SUDAN

PERHAPS the chief blessing which the very unconventional agreement of 1899 conferred upon the Sudan was that it freed the administration from the burdens of the Capitulations. It also placed the disposal of funds in the hands of men of irreproachable honesty and considerable ability. The districts into which the territory was divided were put into the hands of military officers, and the Government was at first a mixture of military and civil rule. Gradually a wholly civil administration has grown up, and civilians are being appointed to the governorship of provinces as the military men retire. Mr. Percy F. Martin, speaking of the nature of the duties of these officers and officials, says: "The mental strain entailed upon Government officials is severe. Sometimes a hundred miles or more will separate their headquarters from the nearest white man's habitation, and months may elapse before a friend's face is seen. The nearest telegraph is likewise possibly many miles distant, while the mails are but rarely received. A single officer placed in charge of a district, extending over

an area of some six thousand miles, may have no more than twenty or thirty troops to assist him in maintaining order among a population of, perhaps, fifteen or twenty thousand people, composed of several distinct tribes, most of which may be at enmity with others, and among whom petty larceny is a very common crime, demanding continual watchfulness and almost as continual punishment. Murders are now rarer, but still not infrequent ; but the authority of the British official alone stands between the criminals and their victims. While the general attitude of the natives towards the Government—born of a recognition of the benefits of a sound and just administration—may be, and undoubtedly is, friendly, this sentiment cannot be expected to control to any extent the naturally suspicious and piratical nature of the people, accustomed for centuries to prey upon one another, and among whom blood feuds and tribal incursions are of traditional meritoriousness. It will be recognised how onerous are the duties, and how great the responsibilities, of the Government officer charged with the control of a district inhabited by such people " (*The Sudan in Evolution*).

A system of justice largely following British law has gradually been evolved. The Bankruptcy Law is based upon the Egyptian Native Code, which itself is derived from the Napoleonic Code. There

are five judges in the High Court, eleven District Judges, and a Chief Judge of the Civil Court Bench. In 1915, by an ordinance dated March 30, a High Court of Justice was instituted consisting of a Court of Appeal and Courts of Original Jurisdiction. This applies to the whole of the Sudan, though the Governor-General has the power to modify its application. One half of the judges must be barristers of the English or Irish Bar or members of the Faculty of Advocates in Scotland of five years' standing. The Court of Appeal consists of not fewer than three members, who have been kept very busy since the institution of the Court.

In a country where Mohammedanism is one of the religions of a section of the people, all matters relating to personal status—marriage, divorce, succession, charities (*wakf*)—are dealt with in special Mohammedan Courts which administer the Koranic law. In the Sudan these Courts form part of the Legal Department; that is to say, while the authorities do not interfere with the judgments of the Kadis, the discipline and general administration of the Courts are supervised by a special committee of the department. The native judges receive their training at Gordon College, where a graduate of the Cairo Law School delivers the lectures. It is unfortunate for the Sudan authorities that Gordon College should have become the centre of anti-British sentiment, through the

Egyptian influence among these students and the cadets in the military school. It has been a feature of the administration that it has gone out of its way to avoid offending the susceptibilities of the Moslems. It has, in fact, gone to considerable extremes in this direction, curtailing the activities of Christian missionaries, except for educational purposes, where Mohammedanism predominates. This ought to have gained the respect of Moslems for the tolerant spirit of a Christian administration, but appears to have given them—or most of them—merely the idea that Christians fear the Moslems.

Under a civilised administration, prisons take the place of summary executions, just as fair trial takes the place of the torture and mutilation to which the inhabitants of the Sudan were only too well acquainted under the old misrule. There are prisons at Khartum, at Wau, the capital of the Bahr-el-Ghazal Province, at Wad-el-Medani, Blue Nile Province, at Dongola, Kassala, Suakin, and at El Obeid, as well as local "lock-ups." Policemen in the Sudan are enlisted for three years, but may volunteer for a further period of two or more years. They must be able to read and write and attend classes for instruction in these subjects, and also in first aid.

The Governor-General, Maj.-Gen. Sir Lee Stack, has stated that the policy of the Government of

the Sudan is "to leave administration as far as possible in the hands of native authorities, wherever they exist, under the supervision of the Government, starting from things as it finds them, putting its veto on what is dangerous and unjust, and supporting what is fair and equitable in the usage of the natives," and he gives an account of an experiment on these lines at Dar Masalit, in Western Dafur which, by the ratification of the convention of 1919 between the United Kingdom and France, was finally included within the boundaries of the Sudan.

The account is well worth attention, as the policy it describes is an interesting example of the change which this century has brought in the attitude of Western civilised powers towards backward races. Instead of planting an alien highly-organised civilisation in the midst of a barbarous or semi-civilised people, governing them by a system entirely uncomprehended by them, and letting them die out, or remain the hewers of wood and drawers of water to their alien Governors, the object now is to let these peoples gradually develop towards a more civilised form of life at their own pace. The result will probably be a lasting bond between such backward races and the civilising powers.

Of the Dar Masalit and other similar experiments Sir Lee Stack says :

“ Occupation of the country was gradual, with a view to establishing confidence in the new régime. A member of the Political Service was appointed Resident, and installed with a small garrison at Kereinik, on the eastern border of the Dar ; later, when the local Sultan and his notables had become accustomed to our presence within his boundaries, and had had sufficient opportunity to gauge the purpose and method of our administration, a move was made to the capital, Geneina.

“ The existing system was carefully investigated. It consisted of a supreme authority in the person of a Sultan, who ruled the country both through agents appointed personally by himself and also through an organisation originally tribal, but tending through the movement of individual families to become territorial in character. The organisation consisted of heads of sections (*farash*, singular *firsha*) and heads of sub-sections (*dimalig*, singular *dimlig*), the latter being the smallest administrative unit, and controlling as many as six villages. Personal agents of the Sultan, both executive and judicial, acted independently of local chiefs, and, as might be expected, this dual system of control led to considerable confusion and irregularity, both in the collection of taxes and in the administration of justice. The powers and jurisdiction of the

various authorities were vague and ill-defined, with the result that the well-being of the people depended to a large extent on the character of the Sultan, who, in the present instance, though highly intelligent, is weak and irresolute.

" Dar Masalit, therefore, provided virgin ground for the trial of a policy of retaining, so far as is consistent with the removal of abuses and the maintenance of a reasonable standard of efficiency, the existing administrative machinery and method. In pursuance of this policy, a regular assessment of the grain crop of 1921-2 by native boards was carried out, with a view to putting the collection of the grain-tax on a systematic basis. The method of assessment is in common use in agricultural provinces of the Sudan. In all there were twelve boards, each consisting of two notables and a clerk. The notables were selected, in consultation with the Sultan, on the criteria of good character and intelligence only. Some were farash, others were agents of the Sultan, and others notables holding no office, and, to inspire confidence, boards containing a firsha assessed the tribal area. Instructions for the boards were issued by the Resident, who, it was intended, should generally supervise the assessment. Owing, however, to the political situation at the time (referred to in my report for 1921), the work of the boards received no

supervision whatever. It is, therefore, all the more interesting to record that, in the opinion of the Resident gained during subsequent tours, the boards as a whole displayed a very high degree of honesty. The tax as assessed has been brought in readily, and the result of this first attempt in Dar Masalit to introduce a regular assessment through native channels is distinctly encouraging.

“Further, early this year, with the consent and co-operation of the Sultan, the existing judicial system was modified, defined, and regularised, and, at the same time, provision was included for the exercise of judicial powers by the Resident. Limited jurisdiction and powers of punishment in respect of certain minor offences are laid down for farash and dimalig; the jurisdiction and powers of the Kadi (the judicial representative of the Sultan, and of the Sultan are also defined. More serious offences are dealt with by minor and major courts constituted by order of the Resident, and consisting of at least three members. Powers of appeal in all cases are amply provided for, and the present system, built on the existing judicial framework, appears up to the present to be, in practice, a successful solution of the difficulty of accommodating native customs and usage to the principles of a stereotyped penal code and procedure. This

method of indirect and advisory administration appears so far satisfactory, and its future development in Dar Masalit will be watched with considerable interest.

“An application of the same policy is being tried in the Southern Sudan by the establishment of Chief's Courts to deal with local cases of minor importance. In Mongalla Province, for instance, four Lukiko, or Chiefs' Courts, now sit monthly in the Latuka district, and the innovation has proved successful.

“Again, in the Upper Nile Province, the internal administration of the Shilluks is being left as much as possible in the hands of tribal chiefs, under the supervision of the Mek, the District Commissioner being concerned only in cases of appeal or if he has reason to suspect any abuse of the native authority. The Governor reports that the system has been an unqualified success.

“In other provinces the policy of conferring magisterial powers on suitable notables to enable them to sit as members of Criminal Courts is being steadily carried out. During the year excellent reports of their work have been received, and the appointment is one that is highly prized.

“The training of native administrative officials through the Sub-Mamurs Training School at Khartum shows favourable progress. Hitherto

selected candidates had held previous Government appointments, but it is interesting to note that this year, for the first time, a candidate who had had some experience as an Omdeh was selected, somewhat as an experiment. The progress he achieved suggests the possibility of tapping a new and promising source for recruitment. In contrast to last year, when eleven candidates were finally rejected as unsuitable, only two failed to qualify for appointment to administrative posts."

CHAPTER XX

TAXATION

DURING the debate which took place in the House of Commons in February 1924 on the Sudan Loan Guarantee for the completion of the Gezira irrigation project, criticism was directed against the grant by members from all parts of the House, and before the second reading took place a deputation waited upon the Government, and, upon their questions being answered satisfactorily, promised to withdraw their opposition, provided the Sudan Government were asked :

(a) To obtain, if possible, an undertaking from the Sudan Plantations Syndicate that all cotton produced in the Gezira should be offered for sale in the first instance in Great Britain :

(b) To examine the possibility of fixing a maximum price at which cotton produced in the Gezira should be sold in order to prevent any attempt on the part of the syndicate or other important financial interests to effect a corner in long staple cotton ;

(c) To furnish a report on the present system

of taxation, both direct and indirect, in the Sudan, with particular reference to its incidence on the cultivators of cotton in the Gezira ;

(d) To furnish a report on the system under which the cultivators hold and develop their plots in the Gezira, with particular reference to the security of tenure enjoyed by cultivators, with statistics as to the number of cultivators who have been dispossessed of their holdings, either at the instance of the syndicate or for any other cause.

The Prime Minister thereupon requested the Sudan Government to furnish the information asked for, and this, when obtained, was duly published in a White Paper. With regard to the first demand—requiring that the Sudan plantations give an undertaking to offer Gezira cotton in the first place to Great Britain—it is interesting to note that the Board of Trade intervened with a letter pointing out that the proposal, if carried out, would be an infringement of Britain's "open door" policy in the Sudan.

The first two demands of the deputation are typical expressions of the narrowest Imperialist spirit—Lancashire's interests first and foremost—and represent the attitude which makes Egyptians and others doubt the disinterestedness which lies behind the remarkably good work done by Britain

in the Sudan. To offer Gezira cotton in the first place to Great Britain would not only reverse Britain's healthy "open door" policy, but would bring about exactly what Lord Cromer, when he framed the Anglo-Egyptian Convention, wished to avoid, and did avoid. In spite of the astonishment of Europe and the annoyance of the Sultan of Turkey at the wording of the convention, "no serious opposition was encountered from any quarter." Why? Lord Cromer supplies the answer :

"In the third place, the Powers of Europe, possibly without meaning it, paid a compliment to British rule. However much the Anglophobe Press on the Continent might at times rave, it was perfectly well known that, under the British flag, Europeans—albeit they were the subjects of Powers some of whom were animated by no very friendly spirit towards England—would be treated with perfect justice. Notably, Article VI. of the Agreement, to which at the time I attached great importance, tended greatly to allay any spirit of opposition which might otherwise have been aroused. It laid down that, in all matters concerning trade with, and residence in, the Sudan, 'no special privileges would be accorded to the subjects of any one or more Power'; in other words, the German, the

Frenchman, the Italian, and others were placed on a precisely similar commercial footing to that enjoyed by a subject of the Queen of England. Even the most militant Anglophobe could not fail to be struck by the contrast between this liberal attitude and the exclusive commercial policy adopted by other colonising European Powers. Thus, in laying the foundations of the new Sudan, a Free Trade policy—which I trust will never be dissociated from British Imperialism—formed one of the corner-stones of the political edifice.”

The information asked for on the four points quoted above is given very fully in a White Paper, Sudan, No. 1, 1924. In regard to the second demand, the fixing of a maximum price for Gezira cotton would be a distinct abuse of our trust for the people of the Sudan, since it would place them at a disadvantage as compared with cultivators in Egypt and elsewhere. If it is necessary to prevent the Sudan Plantations Syndicate from forcing up the price of long staple cotton in years to come—they could not do it at present—some method must be found which will not press hardly upon the people of the Gezira, whose produce is sold at current market prices.

The last two requests are more apposite, and reflect at least a certain amount of interest taken

by Members of Parliament—late in the day, perhaps—in the work of the Sudan Government.

Taxation in the Sudan falls under two heads—direct and indirect. The former comprises direct taxes on land cultivation (approximating to a tithe or levy of one-tenth of the crop) and on animals, and they fall mainly on the sedentary cultivating tribes and on the pastoral cattle-owning tribes. Primitive tribes pay a poll-tax or a tribute levied on the whole tribe as may best suit conditions prevailing. The Government also receives royalties on exports of valuable natural products, such as gum and ivory. They are collected from merchants or exporters, but actually fall upon the natives who bring in these products to the market, who thus pay the equivalent of the land and cattle levied upon the people who live on their produce. The Government makes special arrangements for the taxation of cotton, which are thus described in the White Paper :

“ Further, cultivation of cotton grown on Government lands is a form of industry which has been created under the present Government. Here the Government renders much more assistance to the cultivator (in the form of supply of good seed, instruction, and supervision by agricultural inspectors, etc.). In this case the cultivators can afford to pay, and the Government is justified in demanding a levy at a higher rate. Such a levy is properly

to be regarded as partly rent, partly payment for services rendered, and partly tax. In the main area now affected (Tokar) it is collected on a sliding scale, and represents roughly about 20 per cent. to 25 per cent. on the crop.

"As regards the incidence of taxation on the cultivators of the Gezira, the scheme of profit-sharing under which the 300,000-acre concession is to be carried on was worked out by the Government so as to give the native cultivators the power to earn a really good livelihood out of their share. Having worked out the basis, the Government deliberately refrained from carrying out a policy of taking away with one hand (in the form of taxation) what it had given with the other.

"Accordingly, the ordinary tax on crops (ushur, or tithe), is not levied on any of the crops grown under the scheme. That is to say, the tenant gets his share of the proceeds of cotton, and the full enjoyment of any grain crop or green crop which he is entitled to grow in the area on his tenancy, free of all taxes.

"It has been estimated that the abolition of the ushur tax (the tithe on crops) from the area will, in effect, mean the abolition of at least three-quarters of the direct taxation borne by the cultivators of that area in the past.

"On the other hand, if a tenant accumulates capital for himself outside the scheme, and becomes

the owner of cattle, he will, on these, be subject to the ordinary taxation (i.e. animal tax) paid by everybody else. It was considered that any exemption from that tax would constitute an undue preference, and be unnecessary.

“ Further, of course, on all the imported goods which he buys he does indirectly contribute to the Government's revenue from sugar and Customs, while his share in the proceeds of cotton is indirectly affected to a very small extent by the Government export tax of 1 per cent. on cotton, which is treated as part of the marketing expenses (*vide* Memorandum No. 2).

Indirect taxes take the form of Customs dues and the profit on the sale of sugar, which is in the hands of the Government. The incidence of the sugar-tax seems to have created an impression on the people of this country, judging by the passionate protests on this subject in the House of Commons during the discussion on the Foreign Office vote on July 10, 1924. The tax might fall heavily upon the people if sugar were used in households as an article of diet, as it is in this country, or were used in moderation. Few people take more than one or two lumps of sugar in a small cup of tea, but in the Sudan, where tea-drinking is very popular on festive occasions, a cup is half filled with sugar, and the tea is a syrupy beverage, very difficult for the ordinary European to drink. The same applies

to Egypt, where sweet dishes are impossibly sweet to our taste, but there sugar is grown, and its use is not a newly acquired habit, as it is with the Sudanese. The Government monopoly was created in February 1919 in order to check profiteering, and to assure an adequate supply when all the world was running short, and the control has been continued "as one of the fairest methods of taxation that could be devised in a country where the standards of living of the different tribes, classes, and nationalities are so varied." (Sudan, No. 1, 1924.)

If there has to be a choice between high prices paid to sugar profiteers and high prices paid to the Government to swell its revenue, the latter is obviously preferable, since the taxed people at least obtain some return for their money when it forms part of the revenue. In 1917, when in the Sudan, I heard considerable complaint about the difficulty of obtaining sugar and the high price of what was available. In 1923, when the Government monopoly had been in existence for four years, I heard no complaints. The natives did not seem to be groaning under an oppressive tax, and though 9d. a pound in Khartum seemed dear compared with Cairo, it was not unreasonable when compared with prices in London, and certainly was not out of proportion to other foreign produce.

With reference to the fourth request of the

deputation, a Memorandum furnished by the Government of the Sudan, appears in the document quoted giving details of the system under which cultivation takes place in the Gezira. It is just as well to take nothing for granted in this world, but those who have seen something of the grandmotherly style of Government adopted in the Sudan—wherever means will permit of it—are not surprised that in the matter of studying the rights of the landowning cultivators, both in the Gezira and at Gebel Aulia (where the Sudanese people are to be dispossessed solely to enable a reservoir to be made to hold up water for Egypt), there has been no trouble spared to work out an equitable system of resettling the people upon the land.

Formerly dependent upon precarious rains and accustomed to periods of famine, during which thousands perished, the inhabitants of Gezira are now beginning to live under a modern system of land development, and the experiment should be watched with interest, particularly since it could not have been undertaken at all had not the Sudan Government obtained loans from Britain, and had not an industrial company been available to undertake the actual working of the scheme.

The inevitable straightness and monotonous appearance of Nile land cultivation is due to the intersecting of the area with water-channels, which must, of course, run straight. In order, therefore,

to make the lands to be irrigated conform to this necessity, the Government, under the Gezira Land Ordinance of 1921, decided to take over on a lease of forty years the whole of the area of 300,000 feddans at a rent of two shillings an acre, and re-allot plots of regular size of thirty acres each to the actual owners in the form of cultivating tenancies. No owner is regarded as capable of cultivating more than thirty acres, but if he owns more he may nominate tenants to work the excess. The Government watches these owner-tenants and tenants in order to see that the latter may not be turned off at the pleasure of the owner-tenant, provided they cultivate the land satisfactory, thus guaranteeing security of tenure. The Memorandum says :

“ Just for this purpose the Government or the syndicate acting for it may have to exercise some control, and cannot, merely for the sake of respecting a freeholder's right, allow a tenant who has worked well and got his land into “ good heart ” to be turned out. This whole aspect of the matter is a somewhat difficult one, and is being watched carefully by the Government, whose special commissioner in the area co-operates closely with the syndicate's inspectors.”

The cotton crop is under the particular supervision of the Government and the syndicate, who between them supply the cultivator with water,

choose his seed, deal with insect pests, supply ploughing machinery, market the crop, and advance money during the cultivating season at low rates of interest. He gets forty per cent. of the proceeds of the sale of the cotton after it has been ginned and taken to market. He does as he likes with the rest of his crops. Thanks to laws made to prevent alienation of land by natives to foreigners for the purpose of speculation, practically the whole of the Gezira land remains in native ownership, mostly in small holdings.

CHAPTER XXI

CIVILISING AGENCIES

THE Gordon Memorial College is the fountain-head of education, and, therefore, of civilisation, in the Sudan. Founded by Lord Kitchener from funds provided by the British public, it is the finest monument to General Gordon's memory that could have been devised. It may well be called the University of the Sudan. Already it possesses the nucleus of a Fine Arts Faculty in a little Archæological Museum, containing antiquities of unique historical and artistic value obtained from hitherto untapped sources. A large portion of these reveal the story of a Sudan civilisation which lasted with a remarkable continuity for more than a thousand years, down to the third century of the Christian era. At present few, if any, of the inhabitants appreciate the meaning of their museum, any more than does the average Cairene understand the significance of the magnificent collection he possesses at Bulak. The beautiful jewels and the gold leaf lavishly displayed there on the tomb furniture attract him as representing so much money and nothing else. The following

story, published as authentic a few months ago in the *Egyptian Gazette*, is only too typical: Two Egyptians in galabiehs and turbans were strolling through the museum, and had already admired the beautiful collection of jewels, and had come down to the ground floor again. Seeing a group of people listening to the curator, who was explaining the significance of an object, one of the men craned his neck and looked over the crowd to see what was attracting so much interest. He retired disappointed, and was heard to say to his companion: "That's nothing. There is no gold there!"

The captious critic may take exception to the founding of a museum¹ when the vast majority of the people of the country are still submerged in ignorance and savagery. But the museum and the Wellcome Laboratories, which are on the opposite side of the corridor at the College, appear to me to be of greater interest to the student of civilisation than even the extension of railways and the increase in mechanical irrigation. Both are widely differing testimonies to the value of

¹ The cost of maintaining the collection, which is housed in a room in Gordon College, is, I believe, practically negligible. The research, of course, costs nothing beyond the transport of the exhibits, since the work is being done by well-equipped scientific parties, notably the Harvard-Boston Egyptian Expedition and the Oxford Expedition, who undertake the examination and collecting of historical data and the publishing of reports. As a reward for their labour they divide the finds equally with the Sudan Government. Mr. Wellcome has also done a considerable amount of archaeological research.

pure scientific research, one in the field of lost and forgotten history and art, and the other in the realm of the hidden and secret processes of nature.

In the Wellcome Laboratories the Sudan possesses one of the finest institutions in the world for the study of tropical disease, particularly in connection with malaria. A traveller from Egypt is agreeably surprised on reaching Khartum to find mosquito nets not in use; the city, by strict obedience to the law, has been rendered as free of the dreaded malaria-carrying mosquitoes as the Panama. But the work of the laboratories is not limited to research in connection with disease. Work in every branch of chemistry, affecting agriculture, entomology, geology, and sanitation, is carried on—truly a wonderful scientific institution to find in the middle of Africa. The donor of the magnificent equipment has been splendidly seconded by the devotion of those who have been in charge of the work, some of them having fallen victims to their enthusiasm and cut short their lives. If for no other reason, for the sake of the Medical Department alone it would be well that Britain should be left in possession of the Government of the Sudan. In a country where, in the past, tropical and other diseases have been allowed to do their worst unhindered, and in view of the danger of disease being brought in across the frontiers, the state of public health is good, thanks to the fine work done. Cholera,

small-pox, enteric, malaria, cerebro-spinal meningitis ankylostomiasis, sleeping sickness, are only some of the contagious and endemic diseases which in former days swept away many thousands annually, while every kind of eye disease afflicted the people. There are, of course, not nearly enough hospitals, extension being limited, as elsewhere in the world, for financial considerations.

Education is carried on by the Education Department of the Government and also by various centres of missionary activity. The latest reports give the number of pupils in schools under the control of the department as 8,815 at the elementary schools, 1,196 in the primary schools, 191 in the upper school at Gordon College, where advanced classes in engineering, teaching, and medicine are held, 36 in the teachers' section, 225 in technical classes, 359 in the elementary schools for girls, and 20 in the Girls' Training College. An important branch of educational work is technical instruction, which in Egypt was too long neglected, and even now is not nearly extensive enough for the needs of that country, for its educational system has produced far too many effendis with untrained hands and useless minds. Gordon College itself has come perilously near the limit of being able to find posts for the youths it has educated for clerical careers. In a country which is almost entirely undeveloped, like the Sudan, the need for

skilled craftsmen and intelligent, if unskilled, labourers is unlimited, while the openings for the equivalent of our "black-coated" workers are few.

The chief missions at work are the Church Missionary Society, which has four primary schools, and the American Mission. The medical work alone of these societies is of enormous value to the people of the Sudan. In Omdurman the C.M.S. centre had, in 1922, 5,929 new patients and 17,220 old patients, while the American Mission gave 22,000 clinical treatments. The Sudan United Mission in the Nuba Mountains and the Roman Catholic Missions also assist in spreading education and bring physical healing to the sick.

The equipping of the Wellcome Laboratories at Khartum for the study of tropical medicine is not Mr. Wellcome's only contribution to the civilising of the Sudan. His work for the natives he employed at Gebel Moya, in Sennar Province, upon his archæological research is in many respects an epitome of the task of the Sudan Government. A graphic account of Mr. Wellcome's methods is contained in a chapter of *The Sudan in Evolution*, by Mr. Percy F. Martin, from which I take the following:

"The local community was notoriously wild and criminal, below the level of many so-called savages, given to terrible excesses, and through much drinking of the native intoxicant, merissa,

unaccustomed to work. Most of the natives were Moslems, extremely fanatical, but grossly ignorant of the true teachings of Mohammed. They flagrantly violated many of the sacred precepts of their religion. . . . Problems innumerable crowded every day. Men and boys were equally incorrigible, and attempted every trick in the calendar to rob, cheat, and deceive ; there was no petty little meanness or method for shirking work that they did not practise. Truth was not in them. . . . Every man went armed with club, knife, or spear. Drunkenness in almost every instance was the real cause of the fighting and crime.

“ In the midst of all this disconcerting turmoil and uproar Mr. Wellcome moved, if not entirely unaffected, at least undismayed, and wholly undeterred from his task of evolving order out of chaos. Unceasing vigilance, self-control, and swift, fearless action invariably gained the day. He never used or displayed weapons. . . . It was but a short time before this that Moncrieff had been murdered by very treacherous natives in this very region, and prominent Government officials had warned Mr. Wellcome of the risks he was incurring. . . . He did not falter, but fearlessly and unflinchingly defied and gained ascendancy over them ; then he gradually subdued their ferocity, and won their respect

and confidence. Soon his position became sufficiently strong to enable him successfully to prohibit the carrying of weapons. . . . Indomitable human will and a keen knowledge of human nature triumphed. In the course of time the 'hopelessly intractable' became gradually amenable; the apparently irreconcilable evinced wholly unexpected traits of reasonableness and good nature."

The account of Mr. Wellcome's successful fight with merissa drinkers would warm the hearts of Prohibitionists: "It was bound up with the effort to persuade the men to save some of the good wages paid them. The Koran forbids intoxicants, and this helped. Sheikhs would swear men on it with a solemn oath to give up their depraved habit, and as drunkenness ceased crime lessened. The end of the first season brought its reward. Industry, thrift, and sobriety made their appearance, and by the beginning of the next season the herds and flocks possessed by the district had doubled. The next effort was to teach the natives to save their earnings. This savings bank system has proved a remarkable success, so much so, indeed, that it has become one of the greatest attractions of the work, and draws natives of many tribes, Moslem and pagan, from distant parts of the Sudan to seek employment at Gebel Moya. Fathers

walk hundreds of miles across the desert to bring their young sons and place them in Mr. Wellcome's charge. . . . Kadis, great holy sheikhs, chérifs, fakis, omdehs, and other Sudanese notables travel long distances to visit Mr. Wellcome's camp, where some of their villagers have been employed, to see for themselves the mysterious excavating workshops, the 'House of Boulders,' and other feats of engineering of which they have heard such wondrous tales from their people. But, above all, they come to see what manner of man is this Englishman at Gebel Moya who has wrought such marvellous reformation in even the most hopeless vagabonds and outcasts of their villages. These visitors take keen and intelligent interest in the conditions of work, methods of training, organisation, discipline, savings bank system, provisions for health, food, water, etc., and they do not disguise their amazement and pleasure when they find it quite true that this man, who has been 'making good Moslems out of bad ones,' is himself a Christian."

There is, as I have said elsewhere, no attempt to Christianise the Moslem population of the Sudan ; nevertheless the cathedral at Khartum, severely plain as a building, impressed me—unexpectedly, I admit—as symbolic of the real source of whatever influence for permanent progress the domination of the British might have for the people of the Sudan. I went almost reluctantly to an evening

service in February 1923, fearing I should hear or see something that would betoken *separateness*, or encounter an atmosphere that would but accentuate the wide gulf between the governing and the governed. The first impression was one of relief at the extreme simplicity of the interior of the cathedral. The eye was not induced to wander, nor the mind made restless, by coloured decoration; even graceful mouldings and carvings were absent, as were also, mercifully, images—a Moslem could have worshipped there without feeling he was among idolaters. How frail seemed the links between Khartum, and even the nearest approach to civilisation at Cairo, five days' and five nights' journey distant! My mind reverted to the last stage of the journey from Halfa—a single line of railway wending its way for days through an endless stretch of yellow, glaring desert, often lost for hours in the shifting sand. (It had just been my experience to be on a train held up in mid-desert for twelve hours by a sandstorm that completely obliterated the railway-track.) But the mere feeling of distance from home was lost in the wonder that the congregation should have been there at all. A group of gold-diggers, of planters, of engineers, of missionaries even, would have been more explicable than this ordinary congregation of typical Britons gathered in this cool and solid structure. A giant hand might

have been plunged one Sunday into a similar scene in Britain, gathered up a handful of citizens, and dropped them with terrific gentleness at this spot. I should say there was not a plutocrat, or even aristocrat, among them. They were of all grades of the common nobility of the British nation. I fell to wondering why they were there. Had the building, had the compact little body of people, any significance other than that of a similar congregation at home? Was this but a part of the Briton's insistence on behaving in a tropical country exactly as he did at home, from attending a cathedral service down to eating bacon and eggs for breakfast? The preacher gave the key to the problem presented by both the building and the people in an environment in which it was so difficult for them to maintain their existence. The object of their lives was the same wherever they might be—service! They were there to serve one another, and above all the people round them; to help them, sympathise with them, have patience with them. It was a great idea—these soldiers, these Government officials, these merchants, whatever their private rivalries might be—and the preacher dealt with them as well—they were there for the service of others. It gave a rational and, at the same time, an ultra-rational explanation, not only of the existence of that building in the middle of Africa, but of the presence of each individual in it.

The missionaries ! the scoffers will say ; yes, missionaries of the sword and big dividends. And they will tell of bloodshed and lives ruined in the service of Mammon rather than Humanity all the world over, and perhaps most cruelly of all among the coloured races. They will mention in connection with the Sudan syndicates dividends and astute Imperialist politicians. Quite true ; but to see only the efforts of these people in the work of civilisation is to have one's vision badly blurred. Julius Cæsar brought his legions to the shores of Britain and slew and conquered, but St. Augustine also came !

CHAPTER XXII

BRITAIN'S DUTY TO THE SUDAN

It has become an increasingly stronger feeling among all sections of the British public that it is the duty of Britain to secure good government for the Sudan. It is useless for the Egyptians to claim that they can govern the Sudan as well as the British. Without making any reference to past history, it is as well that the Egyptians should face the facts as they exist to-day. By good government is not meant merely exercising sovereignty over a country, but the making and administering of laws which will conduce to the continued progress and enlightenment of the people. Egypt herself is at present at the bottom of the ladder of social efficiency; she is little more than a semi-civilised country, with less than 10 per cent. of her people able to read and write. She is—or should be—just now absorbed in the heavy task of taking over from expert Western hands the complete control of her own administration. With this burden upon her it is not humanly possible that she could rule the Sudan in a way that the civilised world would tolerate. She has not, for

instance, the remotest chance to-day of being given a mandate to rule the Sudan under the League of Nations, if she applied for one, and this in itself should be a sufficient answer to those who demand the evacuation of the British in favour of an Egyptian Government in the Sudan.

Now comes the question, Could not Egypt be allowed a greater share in the administration of the Sudan? At first sight this might seem a perfectly reasonable demand, but here again the answer must be an emphatic *no*. The extraordinary progress that has been made in creating for the Sudan a system of government where nothing worthy of the name existed before has been due solely to the fact that, since the reconquest, the country has been in the hands of a very small body of British officials, all of whom, selected in the first place with great care, have devoted themselves to their duty. On one occasion the writer unwittingly gave great offence to an Anglo-Egyptian official lent to the Sudan Government by making a comparison between the British official in the Sudan and his colleagues in Egypt in favour of the former, but I have seen no reason to change my opinion. There are fine men in both administrations, but there is no doubt that the Sudan official has had a far better chance of expressing in his work the finest qualities of his race than his brother in Egypt has enjoyed ; the reason being, of course, that in Egypt

the British official has been handicapped by the dead-weight of Oriental inefficiency. The Anglo-Egyptian official on duty wears the tarboush, the sign that he is in the service of the ruler of Egypt. There is no reason, of course, why the ruler of Egypt, whether his title be Khedive, Sultan, or King, should not insist upon making his foreign employees wear an extraordinarily unbecoming and unsuitable head-covering if he chooses, and I do not think the Anglo-Egyptian has ever made an objection to doing so (except in private), and has cheerfully risked sunstroke whenever he has had to wear the tarboush out of doors. But the spirit of "malesh" (never mind!) lurks beneath the tarboush, and however enthusiastic a young man may be on coming out from Britain to Egypt, it is proverbial that he must expend only a certain amount of his energy on his job, or perish of heart-break in the vain attempt to force the pace of the Egyptian. The Egyptian effendi, when he can forget his political fury for a moment and lay aside his mantle of superior aloofness, will laughingly tell you this is perfectly true.

In the Sudan the influence of the Oriental habit of mind which clogs the machinery of State in Egypt has been completely absent in high places. There has been nothing to hinder Governors of provinces from devoting themselves with a single-hearted enthusiasm to the task of governing, and

their staffs have given them the loyal support they would naturally command. The progress they have made, when the state of backwardness of the human material they have had to handle is considered, is very remarkable.

It is impossible for the traveller in the Sudan, particularly if he happen to be one who has resided in Egypt for a number of years, not to become aware, as he passes from one country to the other, of the subtle difference in the prevailing spirit north and south of latitude 22°. It can only be accounted for by the fact that there is one single authority in the Sudan—that of a civilised and efficient Power. There is considerable cause for astonishment and admiration in the fact that the million square miles comprised in the Sudan are administered by a mere handful of British officials, numbering (outside the technical departmental staff of the Government at Khartum) altogether 136!

The minor officials in the country have been naturally drawn from among Egyptians (Moslems and Copts) and Syrians, but all are under the control and supervision of British officials, and the people of the Sudan know this. Many Egyptians have worked loyally and well, but, on the other hand, a section of their colleagues have never been able to divest themselves of the old methods and manner which led the Sudanese to rebel against Egyptian rule forty years ago, and these men have been an

unfortunate hindrance to progress in the districts where they have been employed. Moreover, Egyptians have always evinced an unaccountable dislike to being employed in the Sudan, and, in consequence, the best type of Egyptian is rarely available for employment outside of Egypt. At present it is taxing all the powers of the Egyptians to provide an efficient personnel for their own administration, and "first-class brains" for the Sudan are less likely than ever to be found.

Were more Egyptians to be employed in the administration—were, for instance, Egyptians to be made Governors of provinces—not only would there be a weakening of control, but confusion leading to the worst possible results would ensue. The central Government would continue to make the best efforts to assist the progress of the inhabitants, but wherever the carrying out of Government's plans became the responsibility of Egyptians, certain Egyptian traits of character would work with deadly effect. Gradually the effect of the different mentality of the Governors would be felt by the inhabitants. Grievances would accumulate, and the native would become increasingly uneasy. In spite of the assertions to the contrary by Egyptian agitators, the Egyptians are not popular in the Sudan. In addition to this, the Sudanese themselves are profiting eagerly from the educational opportunities provided by the Government, and each year Gordon

College sends out more and more young men equipped to take their part in the work of administration of their own country. An increase of Egyptians would not be regarded with favour by these aspiring youths, and jealousy, even if there were no instinctive mistrust of the Egyptians, would work with dire results among the smaller classes of officials.

At present order is maintained by a small, picked body of officials and a comparatively small army. An admission of more Egyptians into the administration would not only be unfair to the Sudanese, who are being educated to fill posts now held by non-Sudanese, but—and this is more serious—it is thought by those competent to judge, might lead to the necessity for an increase in the number of troops in the country to maintain order. This is the last thing the Sudan Government could desire, for it would entirely defeat the object it has before it, namely, to make the Sudan self-sufficing from every point of view. So far it has not paid for its defence by Egyptian and British troops, and it is quite unthinkable that any risk, entailing more than the minimum of troops necessary, should be run.

What settlement can Egypt therefore expect of her claims to the Sudan? She cannot maintain her "rights of conquest," since without British troops and her own troops under British command

she could never have won back the Sudan from the Mahdi's successor, and might have been overrun herself by the dervish hordes. The League of Nations, if she were in a position to apply to it, would not grant her a mandate to rule the Sudan. The best Egyptians are needed in Egypt, and an increase of inferior Egyptians in the Sudan administration would clog the wheels of progress, and might lead to an impossible military burden being placed upon the Government. Yet Egypt has undoubted claims in the Sudan which must be recognised. The first is that her water supply must be guaranteed. As already pointed out, the Nile Control Schemes were designed by British officials with the approval of Egyptian Ministers, and examined and favourably pronounced upon by a commission of experts which included an American. There should be no difficulty in appointing a joint board, which would be responsible for the proper carrying out of the schemes and safeguarding each country's rights. In case of disagreement, arbitrators, provided perhaps by the League of Nations, could be called upon to settle matters in dispute. It is true the Egyptians have refused to consider such a board when proposed by the Milner Mission, and later by Lord Curzon, but this is a case where Great Britain must insist upon doing a fair and just thing without paying attention to opposition, for the appointment of a

Nile Board would undoubtedly be the solution of the water question, which would be recommended by an impartial judge.

Egypt's financial assistance to the Sudan must not be overlooked. Although at one time it taxed her resources, yet it has been an invaluable investment, inasmuch as, since the reconquest, she has not only had peace on her southern frontier, but has had trade facilities she never before enjoyed. Particularly was this noticeable during the war, when, to mention only one item, Sudan cattle largely helped to save the situation in Egypt when the meat supply ran short. Nevertheless, allowing for this, if the Sudan is to become self-supporting some recognition of its indebtedness to Egypt must be made. Various methods have been adumbrated for the solving of this problem, but in all probability, once the sum has been agreed upon, a joint British and Egyptian Commission, with powers similar to those of the Egyptian Public Debt Commissioners, would be all that is necessary to see to the carrying out of an arrangement for the payment of interest on the debt and its final redemption.

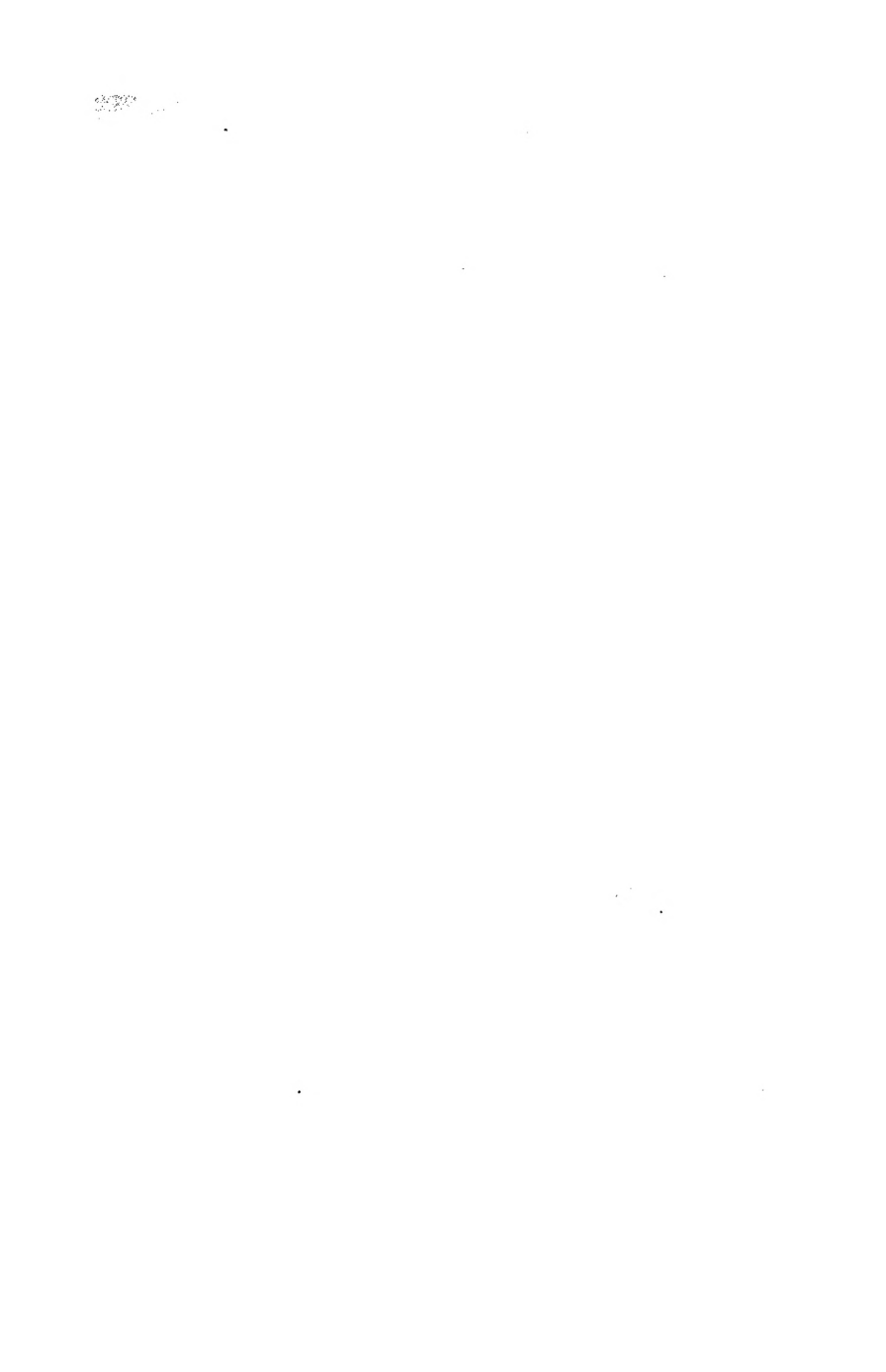
At present the chief burden of garrisoning the Sudan falls upon Egypt. This is another matter that requires readjustment. The Governor-General of the Sudan is also Sirdar, or Commander-in-Chief, of the whole Egyptian Army, half of which is commanded by British officers, whether serving

in the Sudan or remaining in Egypt. It is the expressed intention of the Egyptian Government to relieve the Sirdar of his command and hand it over to an Egyptian. This is but natural. It is also intended to remove British officers from the Egyptian Army. Those who have made the question of the army in the Sudan a matter of close study are of the opinion that the Sudan must eventually find its own army, and that in doing so it can provide at a cheaper rate for its own defence than by paying for an Egyptian Army. The cost to Egypt to-day to maintain an army in the Sudan is not less than £1,200,000 a year, and, on the removal of her troops as the Sudan Army grows, Egypt might reasonably be asked to contribute a much smaller sum towards the defence of the Sudan than she now spends in maintaining an army in the country.

(See page 325.)



PART III



CHAPTER XXIII

THE TREND OF CIVILISATION

THE settling of international difficulties by other means than warfare is still a new and comparatively untried idea among civilised nations ; but so at one time was the idea of settling personal affronts by any other means than that of duels among persons moving in polite society. The time will doubtless come when the international courts will be kept as busy as the divorce courts to-day ; but the object of the former will be to heal breaches and end estrangements rather than make them permanent. The peaceable future of the human family is the picture held before us by the writer on " Civilisation " in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, who says : " The citizen of the future, if the auguries of the present prove true, will be able to apply the principles of right and wrong without reference to national boundaries. He will understand that the interests of the entire human family are, in the last analysis, common interests. The census through which he attempts to estimate ' the greatest good of the greatest number ' must include, not his own nation merely, but the remotest member

of the human race. On this universal basis must be founded that absolute standard of ethics which will determine the relations of cosmopolite man with his fellows. When this ideal is attained, mankind will again represent a single family. . . . Each member of this family will be permitted to enjoy the greatest amount of liberty consistent with the like liberty of every other member ; but the interests of the few will everywhere be recognised as subservient to the interests of the many, and such recognition of mutual interests will establish the practical criterion for the interpretation of international affairs."

We may take it, therefore, that the lion will yet lie down with the lamb in international goodwill. Egypt and Britain will be real friends some day. The element for this already lies in the hearts of individuals of both nations, and an incident which happened in the dark days between 1919 and 1922 is well worth putting on record, for its memory may serve to sweeten much of the asperities of political discussion yet to be held, and in itself it points as a beacon to the quarter whence we must expect the light of truly civilised international understanding to break :

A British official with his young wife and two months-old baby were proceeding on summer leave from Cairo to Alexandria by an early morning train to avoid the heat of the day. The husband

placed his wife and child in a *hareem* (ladies') carriage and went to see that his servant had had the luggage weighed and put on the train. Unfortunately, he got back to the platform to see the guard's van disappearing. His wife did not discover for some time that her husband was not on the train, and then she found to her horror that the basket with the baby's food had not been handed in to her. The train, being a slow one, would take nearly five hours to reach Alexandria; her baby's first feed had been given at six o'clock; there was no restaurant car, and she dared not ask for milk at a station for fear of typhoid contamination. In the carriage with her were two ladies—a Greek and a beautiful young Egyptian mother, whose little black maid-servant held a fine baby boy a few weeks old asleep on a clean white cushion. Presently he awoke and was handed to his mother, who fed him at her breast. Meanwhile the anguish of the British mother was growing unbearable, for her child was wailing feebly for food. She had caused the conductor to make a third thorough search of the train, hoping her husband, or at least the boy with the basket, might yet be there. The Greek lady, to whom she talked in French, was sympathetic, but could offer no suggestions until the Egyptian baby had been fed. Then she leaned forward, and in Arabic explained the plight of the mother who was not so fortunate as to be able to

feed her child herself. Immediately the Egyptian mother's arms were held out for the Englishwoman's child, who satisfied her hunger from the same source as the Egyptian baby had just done. When Tanta was reached the Egyptian lady got out. Before she did so, she turned, and, pointing first to one baby and then to the other, said : " They are now brother and sister ! "

We must wait perhaps a long time before nations will undertake the great adventure of setting up, as a standard of political behaviour, the performance of deeds expressing the kinship of the whole world. The founding of the League of Nations is a first faltering step towards a great ideal, and if the writer, whose vision of the trend of civilisation is quoted above, be right—and I do not see why he should not be—the path of statesmen and politicians is plain ; they have but to recognise mutual interests and such recognition will establish the practical criterion for the *settlement* of international affairs.

CHAPTER XXIV

COPTS AND MOSLEMS

ARABI served his day and generation by arousing Egyptians to a sense of their nationhood; the eloquent Kamel created an aggressive National Party; the Zaghlul movement, produced national unity. As I have already stated, Kamel's movement, though called National, did not by any means rouse the whole of Egypt. It was the most extreme, the most clearly defined of two or three fairly definable political sections of the educated classes—not parties in our sense of the word, since little distinct political work was accomplished or even attempted by any but the adherents of Mustafa Kamel. The marshalling of the people into anything like political parties corresponding to our own has only just begun in Egypt, and is not yet understood by the masses.

Egyptian political parties have hitherto resembled cliques, the members of which might just be the friends of the founder of a newspaper through which they could express their opinions upon current events. At times they did not even get so far as

that. For years before the war, much to the amusement of those in Egypt who knew the position, the home Press published at intervals telegrams on Egyptian politics purporting to come from the "Liberal Party" in Egypt. The messages were sent on his own initiative by a gentleman named Wahid. The word in Arabic also means *one* or *only*, and, strangely enough, Mr. Wahid was the only one in the party! With the help of an Englishman he had put down on paper a wonderful Liberal programme, but that was all. In like manner, at one time, a "Conservative Party" tried to obtain a hearing, but so far as we could ascertain it possessed only a President, who lived in Upper Egypt.

But other parties actually existed and had a following. There was, for instance, one party, composed almost entirely of men of rank, which called itself the Party of the People, but would have been more correctly described as the Party of the Aristocrats. They sympathised with the objects of the Nationalists, but were more dignified and less outspoken, as became their standing. They controlled a newspaper called *Al Garidah*, founded by one of their number. There was also a "Reform Party," bent upon obtaining certain changes in the administration favourable to Egyptians, but far removed from urging schemes of social reform such as Western people would

expect from a group of people thus labelled. None of the men of these parties would have openly joined Kamel's Nationalists, but all became strong supporters of Zaghlul and the Wafd, so that, with the adhesion of the Copts, the Nationalists of 1919 were able to boast that they were "One party—the nation."

Perhaps the most convincing as well as the most surprising thing that the post-war Nationalist movement produced was this national solidarity. "We are a united nation" was the slogan. Political unity had in a measure been achieved before. During the Arabi rising, the Ulema, the constitutionalists and the military forgot their differences, but the Christian element did not then assert itself. According to Mr. W. S. Blunt, when Arabi first became Minister for War, "the Egyptians for the first time found themselves quite united. Sheikh Mohammed Abdu and the cautious Azhar reformers from that point threw in their lot wholly with the advanced party . . . and for many days after this I hardly heard anything from my Egyptian friends but the language of Pan-Islamism." Pan-Islamism has formed no part of the new Nationalist movement. The Christians (Copts) were as enthusiastic as the Moslems. In the political sense there never was a Coptic Party, though the Copts stood almost as a body in opposition to Nationalism as represented by the Pan-Islamists.

Kamel Pasha's Party dabbled in Pan-Islamism in its earlier phase, but their leader found it to be a mistaken policy, and latterly made an outward profession at all events of wishing to unite the Christian and Mohammedan elements of the nation in one political bond.

In 1919 religious differences were sunk. Copts and Moslems were, outwardly at all events, brothers. Al Azhar, the great Mohammedan University, was thrown open to the Christian patriot ; Moslems spoke in Christian churches. Politics became the real religion of the people, and, since public meetings were forbidden by the law of Assembly, referred to earlier, the Mosques on Fridays became more than ever, the political meeting-places, and, in a less degree, when excitement was fanned higher than usual, the Coptic churches were also used for the same purpose. It was high time that Moslems and Copts learned not only to tolerate each other, but to appreciate the fact that though a vital difference of creed separated them, yet both were Egyptians.

The Copts alone can claim to be the direct descendants of the ancient Egyptian people who, tradition says, were converted to Christianity by S. Mark. The word Copt itself shows their indigenous origin since " Kobti " or " Gubti " was the name given to Egyptians by their Arab conquerors, who thus corrupted " Aigypptos," the Greek name for Egypt.

The majority of the Egyptians gradually accepted Islam, the religion of their conquerors, but a remnant, in spite of persecution, clung tenaciously to their creed. To-day the Copts number a million. They have their Church Government under a Patriarch, who also holds sway over the Abyssinian Church, and they continue to carry out their religious observances (many of them, it is supposed, closely following those of the early Christians), partly in the Coptic language, the only living link with the speech of the Ancient Egyptians.

The fellah or peasant Copt is much like his Moslem fellow-countryman, but the Copt of the town has always clung to clerky employment. The illiterate Arab conquerors of Egypt found excellent scribes among the inhabitants, and employed them as such, and through the succeeding centuries the Copts have maintained their superiority as accountants and clerks. Also to this day the Copts are, in proportion, more literate than the Moslems. In the early days, after the Arab conquest, the Moslems were naturally in the minority, but gradually, through conversions of the poorer classes to Islam (to escape oppression) and through further Arab settlement, the Christian population dwindled, until to-day it is as 1 to 13.

The persecution endured by the Coptic community at the hands of their Moslem rulers during the Middle Ages has had its effect on their mentality.

One is struck in finding among the Copts persons of a calm, lofty and superior bearing, verging on the supercilious, as well as individuals whose characteristics are cringing cowardice and servility. Since the days of Mohammed Ali there have been no persecutions of Copts, but they have had their grievances, and these found vent in 1911 in a Coptic Congress, which took place at Assiut (the largest centre of the Egyptian Christian population). The objects of the Congress were not religious, but political. The demands were: Equality of treatment for applicants for public posts, candidates to be chosen according to their merits; Sunday as a day of rest for Copts; proportional representation in elected assemblies, so that Copts might have representatives according to their numerical strength. In regard to the first demand, Copts, though employed in considerable numbers by the Government, were not receiving, on the whole, such high salaries as Moslems. The *Ahaly* published at the time statistics showing that in the Ministry of Interior 1,908 Moslems received £E.18,881 a year, and 3,643 Copts received only £E.19,447, or roughly £E10 a month, on the average, for Moslem employees and half that amount for Copts. This low average for Coptic remuneration was accounted for by the fact that the higher posts, such as Mudir (or Governor) of a province, were, and are still, always given to Moslems, the excuse

being that the Mudir has certain religious duties to perform, though all they amount to in practice is to accompany the ruler to prayers in a mosque should his visit to a province happen to fall on a Friday.

The Moslems, not to be outdone, held a Congress two months later at Heliopolis which was a great success as far as numbers were concerned, but, though it was called an Egyptian Congress, instead of a Moslem Congress, it was not really one or the other, since to be the latter it would have had to deal with religious affairs entirely, and to be a true Egyptian Congress it would have had to include Copts as well as Moslems. It would have been a very fine thing had a National Congress been held, in which Copts and Moslems were united, but Egyptians were not so far advanced then. As it was, the Congress, following the Coptic Congress, dealt with things religious. Friday as a day of rest was unanimously decided upon, as would be expected from a Moslem assembly. It is interesting to note in this connection that there is nothing in the Koran or Traditions which makes Friday obligatory as a day of rest, and I have observed that groups of Moslem workmen employed away from their homes will choose as their weekly holiday, in preference to Friday, the day of the local market, in order to be able to make their purchases on that day. And, in any case, Friday is not looked upon by the masses of the people as a day of rest.

The Moslem Congress went even further in its retaliation on the Copts, for it declared that the religion of the State was the Moslem religion. An excellent resolution was proposed demanding that Government posts should be accorded on the merits of candidates after examination, but when passed a rider was added to the effect that when two or more candidates were of equal merit, preference should be given to the Moslem. Further, it was resolved to ask the Government that the Moslem religion only should be taught in the schools. Having thus retaliated upon the Copts, the Moslems passed a pious resolution affirming that the Copts were their brothers, and proceeded to discuss questions of general social interest. Thus the Copts, who had hoped undoubtedly by their Congress to enlist the sympathy of the British to their cause, merely gave the Moslems an opportunity to emphasise their strength.

In connection with the Coptic agitation, an attempt was made to elicit sympathy in London for the Copts by making representations complaining that the British favoured the Moslems and were unjust to the Copts, but at the same time extolling the benefits which had accrued to Egypt through British rule, and particularly under Lord Kitchener's administration.

That was in 1911. Seven years later all was changed. From the date of the Armistice, for the

next few years, the Cross and the Crescent were to be seen on banners heading processions, on commemoration buttons and on paper headings. In fact, for the first time the Moslems realised that they could never achieve their independence unless the Copts made common cause with them. From the beginning of the agitation for the removal of the Protectorate they understood the value of a united front, and it is largely to their sagacity in this respect that the success of the agitation has been due.

Although the fraternising, so marked during the stormy times through which Egypt has recently passed, is now less obvious than it was, it is to be hoped that there will never be a reversion to the old hostility. There are, however, many onlookers who are sceptical about the sincerity of the Copts' attitude, and they maintain that the Christians' furious anti-British professions were merely put on to save their skins, since any lukewarmness on their part might have secured an intolerable amount of veiled persecution at the hands of the Moslems if political freedom were achieved without their active help. This may be true in a measure, but is hardly a fair judgment on the movement as a whole.

As public instruction becomes more general, the present superior position in which the Copts find themselves as regards educational qualifications,

will of course, become less marked. The Coptic priesthood is very ignorant, but outside that the Copts are better educated than the rest of the population. Coptic boys, too, come out better at examinations than their Moslem schoolfellows, and are therefore credited by their foreign schoolmasters with having better brains. Their success may be due to the fact that the Copts have always made greater efforts to obtain education than the Moslems, or it may be that as descendants of the old Egyptians they enjoy a cultural inheritance superior to that of the descendants of the Arabs. The fact now to be noticed is that more and more Moslems are being educated every year and becoming equipped to take Government posts at present held by Copts, who are obliged to see themselves superseded by Moslems with as good grace as possible.

When Egyptians have advanced so far as to be able to look upon their fellow-countrymen as neither Moslems nor Copts, but as Egyptians, in normal times as well as in times of political stress, and when they have learned to prefer that promotion shall depend upon merit rather than upon religious beliefs, then they will overcome one of the main obstacles that bar their road to civilisation.

But unity does not come natural to Egyptians. They have a remarkable way of quarrelling among themselves, and on the slightest provocation indulge

in the most violent personal abuse of each other. The Wafd, therefore, after the first blush of enthusiasm had passed off, had hard work to prevent divisions, particularly in view of the fact that Zaghlul's truculency did not appeal to everyone. During the first years after the war any attempt to form a party, even for the purpose of encouraging social reform and benevolence, was denounced vehemently in the heavily subsidised Wafd Press. The Wafd's efforts to maintain a united front were ably seconded by the actions of the British Government, which during the three years after the war continually played into the hands of the more determined Nationalists, and had the effect of quickly healing breaches as soon as they appeared. It was not until the summer of 1921 that the Wafd was irrevocably split and a number of Zaghlul's early supporters—even some who had been in exile with him—rallied round Adly Pasha Yeghon and formed the Constitutional Party, which constituted the Opposition in Egypt's first Parliament under independence.

CHAPTER XXV

CAN THE EGYPTIANS GOVERN THEMSELVES?

CAN the Egyptians govern themselves? This question is often asked. The answer is : Certainly, in their own way. Unfortunately, the test of the Egyptians' ability to govern themselves is that they should do so in a manner that will satisfy the people of various nationalities who have interests in a well-governed Egypt. Of no other country except Mexico do people talk in the same way as they do of Egypt, but no one has yet taken up the burden of doing for Mexico what Britain undertook to do for Egypt.

On the whole, we may safely say that the British have made a better job of their government of Egypt than of Britain. Taking only one aspect of our rule, we found Egypt biting the dust financially, and her administration in chaos in 1882. When we handed over the reins of Government in 1922 to the Egyptians we left the financial position so flourishing that the following year they actually voted twenty-one per cent. of their revenue to the reserve. Britain, on the other hand, is overwhelmed

with debt ; her working classes are scandalously housed, and are degenerating fast as a result of unemployment, while her governing classes are filled with fear of the Bolshevist bogey as they see the rich growing richer and the poor growing poorer. Would a visitor from Mars judge that the British were fit to govern themselves if, with all the resources of science and modern invention at their command, they are unable to feed, clothe and house the nation decently ?

But though the British and many other peoples may govern themselves abominably, the Egyptians are not allowed to go beyond a certain limit in this direction. As the late Sir William Hayter (Legal Adviser to the Egyptian Government) pointed out in a paper read at the Summer School at Cambridge in August 1924 : " Egypt is, and always must be, the victim of her own geographical position. Her territory lies right across the main line of communication between England and her Eastern Dominions and possessions, between France and her Eastern Colonies, between Italy and Eritrea. It is not only a matter of keeping open the Suez Canal ; the demands of aviation and of wireless telegraphy have nowadays to be considered. Thus not only England, but France and Italy, Australia and New Zealand, India and French Indo-China, are all directly interested in the maintenance of stable and orderly government in Egypt, while the other

European Powers, China and Japan, are concerned in a less degree. If an Egyptian Government can provide a regular and peaceable administration for Egypt, so much the better ; but, if not, it is as certain as anything can be that some Power, or group of Powers, will always be obliged to intervene to restore order. Bulgaria or Greece may be allowed a revolution or so without interference, but not Egypt."

The possibility that an ill-governed or weakly-defended Egypt is never likely to be left alone to manage her own affairs is no new theory put forward as an excuse for British Imperial tactics, but is borne out by the past records of Egyptian history. For Egypt has rarely been governed by Egyptians, and her rulers have seldom been of Egyptian blood. Even the present dynasty is an Albanian one, whose founder, Mohammed Ali, obtained his dominating position in the first place by the aid of Albanian and Turkish troops. And Mohammed Ali merely replaced the Ottoman rulers who, in their turn, had replaced the Circassian and other foreign Mamelukes—the amazing slave rulers who successfully made themselves kings from A.D. 1250 to 1517, the date of the Turkish conquest. The Mamelukes had followed the Saracenic dynasty of Saladin (the Ayyubite), which ruled for one hundred years, taking the place of the Fatimites, who ruled from 969 to 1171. The

Fatimites had been preceded by the Ikshidi, who followed the dynasty founded by Ahmed Ibu Tulem in A.D. 863. Previous to that Egypt was a province of the Eastern Calipitiate, 'Amr having in 640 made an easy conquest of the country, which had been in Roman occupation since 30 B.C. The Romans had succeeded the Greeks, who had ruled from the date of Alexander's conquest, 332 B.C. The Greeks in turn had found the Persians in possession, these having conquered Egypt in 525 B.C. Before the Persians were overthrown by the Greeks, the Egyptians for a period of sixty years had enjoyed independence, their last king fleeing to Ethiopia when the Persian dominion was re-established.

Tracing the history of Egypt back still farther in this House-that-Jack-Built way, we find that the Assyrians preceded the Persians, and the Assyrians had not found it easy to overcome the Ethiopians who had descended the Nile, overthrowing the Libyan kings and ruling the vast territory, from the marshes of the White Nile to the Mediterranean. But, previous to the advent of the Libyans, Egypt for a time enjoyed home rule under a series of feeble and corrupt kings of native origin, who were supported by foreigners and foreign troops. The Nineteenth and Eighteenth Dynasties (1545-1200 B.C.) may be reckoned to be periods of government by Egyptian rulers (though even these were largely affected by foreign blood), who followed

the long, obscure period which began after the fall of the great Twelfth Dynasty, 2000 B.C.

It has thus been computed that during the last four thousand years Egypt has always been in the occupation of foreigners, except during the period of the strong native rulers of the Eighteenth Dynasty, the semi-Egyptian rule of the three dynasties which followed, and a few short periods of chaotic rule in later times. The history of Egypt is a long, tragic story of conquests and foreign occupations, interspersed with revolts and punitive expeditions from its earliest days to the present time.

Fortunately, Egypt has started her experiment in independent democratic rule at a moment when the most powerful nations of the world are deliberately endeavouring to limit their own and each other's aggressiveness. The League of Nations may, and it is to be hoped will, prevent any further conquests of Egypt, but if Egypt cannot control her own turbulent spirits the world will insist upon someone doing it for her.

It will all depend upon whether Egypt's rulers, her statesmen and her parliamentary representatives, will be able to gain and keep the respect of the people generally. The British-made administration which they inherit is bound to suffer, chiefly because the Egyptian temperament is diametrically opposed to the Western habit of

mind, which sees the necessity for keeping machines, whether governmental or other, in good repair. An Egyptian buys a machine—a bicycle, a car, an engine—no matter how valuable it may be, and runs it to death. He does not trouble about cleaning it—unless someone makes him—and in a very short time his *makina*, as he calls it, is a heap of scrap-iron. He then buys a new one, if he is rich, or goes without, if he is poor. Buildings suffer in the same way. They are allowed to get into a state of disrepair, entailing large sums for renovation, if, indeed, they do not become ruins. Clothes, too, are not treated as they should be. Complimenting a poor Egyptian, once, upon the handsome pieces of dress material he was sending to his wife for the feast of Beiram, I asked him what she had done with a similar quantity he had sent to her only a few months previously. "Ah," lamented he, "our women are not like foreign women; they never mend clothes. When they get torn they are thrown away and we are asked to supply more."

Even Ministers now in office apparently do not understand that railways require constant care and attention, that the permanent way cannot be left for even a day to take care of itself, that a sparing of lubricators spells ruin in locomotives, that roads need to be mended, and that streets do not clean themselves. In the short time which

has elapsed since British control of the administration was withdrawn, and British officials for the most part removed, evidences of neglect of necessary "upkeep" are everywhere apparent, and attention is called by Egyptians themselves in the Arabic Press to things which "were not thus formerly." It would indeed have been astonishing had there been no signs of deterioration under independence in Egypt, but the deterioration is unnecessarily aggravated in some cases through the well-meant zeal of heads of departments to show how they can economise. Papers are sent to Ministries for signature in order that the necessary orders may be made out for new works, repairs or materials. The "chief" quietly puts them aside, and the works are not executed. Money is saved, the Minister will say, and he thinks he is proving that the British were extravagant. He little realises that later on great expense will have to be incurred to make good the losses. In fact, already, through the false economies practised since 1922, the Government has decided it must spend £3,000,000 on the railways, which have been allowed to get into a far worse state of repair than was warranted by the period of war and of subsequent high prices, when only absolutely necessary work was carried out, and it is not for nothing that three British officials appointed to the management of the Government railways during the last two years have retired.

The temperament of a people which allows buildings or railways to get out of repair or irretrievably ruined is no concern of outsiders, it may be argued. But when it comes to a matter of good government the case is different. Egypt has changed since Ismail's time, when the Canal was a new thing. The amount of foreign investments to-day in the country is very large—French investments were quoted recently as amounting to £200,000,000. Commercially, Egypt could not exist for a day without her foreign population, and it is still considered so dangerous for a foreigner to be at the mercy of Egyptian law that he is protected under the Capitulations, not only by his Consular Courts, but by the International or Mixed Courts of Law as well. The rulers of independent Egypt have therefore a very difficult row to hoe if they wish to govern without foreign interference.

The declaration of 1922 went a long way towards making Egypt "completely" independent, and a little wisdom in regard to the four reserved points would ensure that that independence would increase rather than diminish, but the attitude of Zaghlul and his political adherents is an unalterable refusal to recognise the essential thing in international relations—the spirit of give and take. They have never taken the trouble to see that there must be elasticity of mind in regard to the rights and claims of others. A consideration of some of the

differences that have occurred between Britain and the U.S.A. (over the rum-runners and the New-castle Consular incident) and between Britain and France (over the German problem) within the last few years would have inevitably led to war had the parties concerned taken the attitude of Zaghlul—insisting on their rights and on the purity of their political methods. The only charitable view to take of the refusal of the Egyptians even to consider whether they can meet Britain's position in regard to the reserved points is that they are still in a very raw state of political development. But since they became independent there have been indications in their attitude to their financial obligations, in their reactionary dealings with labour, and in their treatment of their foreign officials—not the British only—that they are placing in jeopardy their "*Istaklal el tam*" (complete independence).

The first session of the Parliament of independent Egypt has been marked by an ominous neglect of the usages of Governments in regard to obligations entered into, as well as for the polite method of dealing with matters affecting other nations. Financiers use the unpleasant word "defaulted" about the decision of the Egyptian Government on the question of the Turkish Tribute bonds. Mohammed Ali Pasha, who obtained the pashalik of Egypt from the Sultan of Turkey in 1806, paid

£60,000 annually as tribute to Constantinople. Ismail Pasha increased the amount to £665,000, obtaining thereby autonomy for Egypt, the title of Khedive, the confirmation of the viceroyalty of the country on his descendants in order of primogeniture. The Turkish Government made use of the Egyptian tribute at various times in order to obtain loans from European financiers. The Turkish loans of 1891 and 1894, which are conversions of the loans of 1854, 1871 and 1877, were secured on the tribute from Egypt, and since the conversion the Egyptian Treasury has paid the tribute direct to the Bank of England for the bondholders.

Opinion is divided as to whether, now that the Turkish suzerainty has ceased, Egypt is liable for the payment of the tribute. A prominent Labour writer on financial matters has declared that Egypt would have to pay; on the other hand, a British business man in Egypt told me he held the contrary view. Egypt's obligations to the bondholders were clearly set forth in the decree of the Egyptian Government, which in the case of the 1891 loan ran as follows:

“ His Highness the Khedive of Egypt has, by an engagement entered into by him on March 20, 1891, undertaken to pay to Messrs. N. M. Rothschild & Sons the annual sum of

£280,622 18s. 4d. for the service of the loan. This engagement will continue until the whole of the loan has been redeemed."

The wording of the decree of the 1894 loan was :

" His Highness the Khedive of Egypt has, by an engagement entered into by him by direction of the Imperial Ottoman Government, and published on June 2, 1894, in the Journal Official of the Egyptian Government, undertaken to pay to the Bank of England the annual sum of £329,249 6s. 1d., which was previously applied to the service of the loans of 1854 and 1871, to be held by the said bank at the disposal of the house (N. M. Rothschild & Sons, New Court, St. Swithin's Lane, E.C.4.), to whom the service of the loan is entrusted. This engagement will continue until the whole of the loan has been redeemed, and the annuity is secured by, and to be deducted from, the Egyptian Tribute."

" By the words of this bond," said *The Times* of October 3, 1924, " the Egyptian Government contracted to pay for the service of the loan until its extinction, and the payment is in no way conditional upon the continuance of the payment of the tribute to Turkey. The tribute is only mentioned in the bond in this way : that the sum for the service of the loan is to be deducted from the tribute.

It therefore merely protected Egypt, after paying under the agreement with the Turkish Government certain tribute moneys to the bondholders from being asked for the moneys again. The fact that the tribute is no longer payable by Egypt to a third party has no bearing upon Egypt's obligations to the bondholders."

The Egyptian Parliament took the view that since November 5, 1919, Egypt had no longer been liable to pay the tribute, since by the Treaty of Lausanne Turkey renounced all rights and titles over Egypt as from that date. The sum due at the time of the decision—July 1924—was paid, but the balance of the annuities standing in the current budget were deposited in the National Bank of Egypt to await the decision of a Court of Arbitration. It is only fair to Zaghlul, who has so rarely acted with moderation or used judgment in his political dealings, to say that when the Deputies wished to cut off the payment of the annuities immediately, he used his authority in the Chamber to have the instalment of July 12 duly paid, and the remaining amount for the year paid into the National Bank. He, however, declared that all the money paid by Egypt under the tribute loans decree from November 6, 1914, when Turkey entered the War, would be claimed by Egypt to be refunded.

The attitude of Egyptians to labour problems is

another matter that foreigners are watching with some uneasiness.

Many Egyptians wish to see Egypt begin to rival Western industrial countries by having her own factories, particularly her own spinning-mills, like Lancashire, or even India. One can only hope that the lack of coal and iron will prevent the horrible system of Lancashire and India from being brought into Egypt, to degrade still further her ignorant peasants. There is already an indication of the fate that awaits an industrialised Egypt in the cotton ginneries of the Delta. It was through the report of Mr. H. N. Brailsford in 1908 that the attention of the authorities was first seriously drawn to the conditions under which children and adults worked in these factories, where the raw cotton is cleaned of its seeds and pressed into bales for transportation. The only thing that saved the lives of the children was that the work was not constant, but the four or five months of the year that the ginning lasts had set its fatal mark upon the men, women and children working long hours in an atmosphere laden with fluffy particles of cotton. At first objections to enacting legislation to prevent the scandal were raised, because it was thought the Capitulations stood in the way of any effective penalties for contraventions being imposed. Under the laws applicable to foreigners, no penalty exceeding one pound or a week's

imprisonment could be inflicted. This would have been no deterrent, but by applying the penalty on a factory-owner who broke the law for each person in his employment it was possible to frame a law to meet the case of the ginners. I have never been able to obtain statistics giving the details of the working of the law, but it is well known that every effort is made by the owners of the ginners to hoodwink the inspectors. I have seen rows of very small children, from five to seven years old, squatting close to the machines, nibbling their food in the dinner-hour, when they ought to have been out of doors; and, walking up and down between the rows of little ones, a giant with a courbash in his hand! I was told by people living in the neighbourhood that the children spend at least twelve hours a day within the walls of the factories. No Factory Acts will ever make the life of the factory-worker comparable to that of the fellah on the land, for in spite of his monotonous toil at the *shaduf* or the *sagqiya*, lifting up the water on to the land, he yet enjoys a freedom unknown to the factory hand, to say nothing of the healthier outdoor life which he leads.

Although there is no fear for the moment of an extension of the factory system in Egypt, the country has a very grave labour problem.

When accounts were reaching this country in 1924 of the Labour troubles in Egypt, and the

ordeals that Labour agitators were undergoing at the hands of the new administration, a Labour journalist in London exclaimed: "I am surprised at Zaghlul. I should not have thought it of him." No one who knows Egypt is surprised that the Nationalists have not yet evolved an enlightened Labour policy. But it is curious and interesting to note that whenever Labour or Radical writers or speakers refer to any country striving for its political freedom against an Imperial Power, they are apt to imply that the politicians they are so anxious to help hold similar views to their own on the subject of the working man and his rights, and on social reform generally. The truth has to be faced that the desire for self-determination and longings for social progress are not necessarily harboured in the same bosom. Hence the spectacle we have witnessed of the "repressed" Egyptians, as soon as the administration came into their hands, treating Labour agitators in such a way that made one Arabic newspaper look back almost regretfully to the days of British martial law, for then, it declared, "persons arrested for political reasons were at least given proper treatment pending trial."

Since February 28, 1922, hundreds of Egyptians have entered into the places which had been occupied for many years by well-trained foreigners, in some cases (notably that of the head of the

Alexandria Municipality) even at higher salaries than the foreigners were willing to accept. These newcomers are finding out that government does not mean merely sitting in an office signing masses of documents with a metal seal, drinking endless coffees with cronies, or taking part in excited debates on the merits of Egyptian as against British claims to rule the Sudanese. There are certain vital needs of the population, particularly the mixed population of the larger towns, which require the serious attention of the new Government, and the most urgent of these is the recognition of the status of labour. At present organised labour does not exist in Egypt in the eyes of the law. No body of workmen can have a legal corporate existence. Nevertheless, workmen have bound themselves together for the redress of their grievances, and have, in many cases, been able to show to the public that they were perfectly justified in the demands they made.

The end of the war brought labour unrest everywhere, and Egypt was no exception. The nation was torn with political upheaval and industrial unrest at the same time. The two movements kept distinct, for the politicians were not interested in the claims of the workers, though they made use of them to swell their street processions and help in the rioting. Even had there been no great movement for independence there would have been

industrial unrest, for, while the cultivators, owing to the high price of all their produce, and particularly the huge prices obtained for cotton, were making fortunes (and spending them), the conditions of the townspeople from Civil Servants downwards deserved the greatest sympathy. The cost of living had gone up to nearly 400 per cent. above pre-war level while wages and salaries had scarcely moved at all.

A series of strikes in the European centres of industry led in 1919 to the setting up of a Labour Conciliation Board under Dr. Granville, one-time Director of the Alexandria Municipality and later (until 1924) President of the Quarantine Board. The Conciliation Board possessed no powers, and could only intervene when asked to do so by one side or other in a dispute. It could listen to the arguments of the employers and employed and then advise. Nevertheless, within these limitations it did remarkably good work, and so many demands were made upon it that it had to be divided into two sections in order to be able to cover the country more easily, for, as a rule, disputes were settled in the places where they occurred. During its first quarter's existence twenty-four main cases were dealt with, in eleven of which the men were on strike. The principal disputes were then, as they have been since, in connection with European companies. Long and acrimonious disputes

occurred between the tramway and electric railway companies of Cairo and Alexandria and their employees, who were of various nationalities. The men demanded a living wage, with regulations of hours of work and of overtime, sick benefit, compensation for disablement, uniform, and so forth. The companies owning the lines had their seats in Brussels and Paris, and their directors experienced a rude awakening from their comfortable obliviousness to the fact that Egyptian and Levantine workmen could not live for ever on starvation wages. While this was being driven home the public had to suffer for many weeks the discomfort of having no trams or electric railways, owing to the efforts of the companies to maintain the *status quo*. The men were finally granted substantial relief, which the prosperous condition of the companies could well afford. Later disputes were occasioned, for the most part, by allegations made by both sides of lack of good faith in carrying out the agreements come to, but some of them were obviously caused by the fact that the workmen were in the hands of unscrupulous leaders, and that the companies were trying to make the most of the ignorance of their employees.

The Conciliation Board from the first pointed out the anomalous position of the Government, which set up a body like itself and at the same time refused to recognise trade unions or pass legislation concerning

them. Through this lack of a legal status the organisation of trade unions in Egypt has been all along beset with great difficulties, and many of the unions formed have had but a very brief existence. For one thing, the men are usually too ignorant to be able to conduct their own affairs, and become the prey of petty lawyers of doubtful character with which Egypt abounds, who, for the sake of advertisement, will undertake to "run" a trade union and fight the men's battles providing there are funds. In a report of the Conciliation Board issued in 1922, out of fifty unions where the profession of the workmen's representative is given, thirty are stated to be lawyers! The question of funds forms almost an insuperable difficulty in the way of the formation of unions, for no money can be banked in the name of a trade union. Hence, when Mr. Matt Giles, of the Workers' Union, who at the request of the Admiralty had been organising the dock labourers at Malta and Gibraltar, paid a visit to Egypt in connection with the disputes of the Suez Canal in 1921, he could only suggest that, pending legislation legalising trade unions in Egypt, the men should form branches of the Workers' Union of Great Britain. And this was done in two cases.

In 1922 there were 38 trade unions in Cairo, 33 in Alexandria, 18 in the Canal Zone and 6 in the provinces, acknowledged by the Conciliation Board. The year previous an attempt was made to federate

the unions, and an idea of the difficulties that the cosmopolitan character of the townsfolk adds to the existing legal difficulties may be gained from the fact that, at the first meeting of the federation held in Alexandria, French, Italian, Greek and Hebrew were the languages used from the platform in addition to Arabic, while in the audience as many more were being spoken.

The new independent administration found itself in 1924 beset with labour difficulties, a new and menacing element asserting itself among the workers. Attacks upon works' managers, attempts to burn down an employer's house and seizure of factories filled foreigners with alarm. The obvious remedy would have been legislation placing workmen's combinations on a legal footing, and the genuine unions could have been differentiated from the groups out merely for mischief. But Zaghlul and his colleagues, after a period of inaction from which they were sharply roused by the foreign communities, could think of nothing better than stern repression. Troops were employed to put down trouble at Gab-bary Dock, and a number of Egyptians, Turks and Syrians, alleged to have been acting under Bolshevik stimulus, were seized and thrown into prison, there to remain for weeks, and even months, without being charged or brought to trial. In this connection the extraordinary and cruel treatment meted out to Mr. Joseph Rosenthal, a respected

and well-to-do citizen of Alexandria, solely because he was a Jew, and had at one time assisted in the formation of genuine labour unions, roused considerable comment among the foreign communities, and the incident served to open the eyes of many people to the reasons why Great Britain had placed among the "reserved points" the claim to protect minorities in Egypt.

Time only can cure Egyptian statesmen of much of their present crudeness and childishness, but if they really wish to learn the secret of self-government they should make the past history of their own country the subject of very careful research. In the annals of past misfortunes they may find a clue to the tragedy of their race, and be able to avoid the snares which have laid them so often under the heels of foreign rulers.

CHAPTER XXVI

A REVIEW OF BRITISH POLICY

AN ex-Anglo-Egyptian official, a learned judge, recently declared that the present position of independence which Egypt has attained is the result of a policy, "in the main consistent," which the British Government has developed with regard to Egypt; that the outbreak of war merely checked the growth of democratic institutions in the country, and that they were finally given to the Egyptians by Lord Allenby's declaration of February 28, 1922.

Perhaps this is how we should like historians in the future to put the case, and in one sense it does represent the armchair ideals of Ministers out of office. But, with all due respect to the learned judge's opinion, no one who has studied the words and compared them with the deeds of British statesmen can possibly regard this as an accurate presentation of the facts. It is—naturally, perhaps—the attitude of the high representatives of the British Government in Cairo, who even go farther, and would have us believe that it was necessary to insist upon Egypt accepting the declaration of

independence. Just before Zaghlul made his second triumphal entry into his native land in September 1923, to become a few months later Prime Minister, the writer was told officially that "we have *forced* a unilateral declaration upon Egypt, and the next step depends upon the Egyptian Government to ask for negotiations on the question reserved for agreement later."

This is a euphemistic way of stating the case. Most of those who know Egypt and the Egyptian problem well are only too keenly aware that the lack of a consistent policy has been the bane of our relations with the country. Without going into too many details, it is worth taking a glance at the history of this policy of imagined continuity.

Before the Occupation, Queen Victoria's Ministers had rooted objections to anything which could interfere with Egypt's administrative independence, and they denounced the suggestion that Britain should occupy the country with troops. Take, for example, the following statements :

LORD GRANVILLE, Secretary of Foreign Affairs,

Despatch to Sir E. Malet, November 4, 1881:

"The policy of Her Majesty's Government toward Egypt has no other aim than the prosperity of the country, and its full enjoyment of that liberty which it has obtained under successive firmans, concluding with the firman of 1879. . . .

It would seem hardly necessary to enlarge upon our desire to maintain Egypt in the enjoyment of the measure of administrative independence which has been secured to her by the Sultan's firmans."

LORD GRANVILLE, Despatch to Lord Lyons, January 30, 1882 :

" Her Majesty's Government have a strong objection to the occupation by themselves of Egypt."

QUEEN VICTORIA, Speech to Parliament, opening of Session, February 7, 1882 :

" I shall use my influence to maintain the rights already established, whether by the firmans of the Sultan or by various international engagements, in a spirit favourable to the good government of the country and the prudent developments of its institution."

LORD GRANVILLE, Despatch to Lord Dufferin, July 1882 :

" Her Majesty's Government continue to hold the view expressed in their circular of the 11th February, that any intervention in Egypt should represent the united action and authority of Europe. They have, in fact, no interests or objects in regard to Egypt which are inconsistent

with those of Europe in Egypt, nor any interests which are inconsistent with those of the Egyptian people."

In spite of these declarations of anti-Occupation policy the British Occupation became an accomplished thing. After that, according to Sir Auckland Colvin, at one time Controller-General in Egypt, "In season and out of season Her Majesty's Ministers never wearied of preaching on the text evacuation."

LORD DERBY, in the House of Lords on February 26, 1885, expressed the opinion of the Government when he said :

" . . . we have steadily kept in view the fact that our occupation was temporary and provisional only, and that our object must be to put the Egyptian administration in such a position that, guarded and guaranteed from external interference, it should be able to stand alone."

Between 1885 and 1888 an effort was actually made to withdraw from Egypt.

LORD SALISBURY announced in the House of Lords on June 10, 1887 :

" We have engaged, subject to certain conditions, which I shall state, to withdraw from Egypt at the expiration of three years from the ratification of the Convention—and we shall."

A Convention was drawn up and signed by the representative of the Sultan of Turkey, Article V. of which laid down that "at the expiration of three years Her Britannic Majesty's Government will withdraw its troops from Egypt." But under pressure from France and Russia, who objected to Britain's stipulation as to the right to re-entry in case of disturbance in Egypt or failure to carry out international agreements, the Convention was never ratified, and the business fell to the ground. When, later, the Sultan declared his willingness to reopen negotiations, Lord Salisbury refused, and pointed out that the discussions had lasted more than eighteen months, and at the end the Sultan had refused to ratify the agreement he made.

Nevertheless, the Occupation of Egypt by British troops was still only regarded as a temporary measure. On May 1, 1893, Mr. Gladstone stated in the House of Commons :

"I cannot do otherwise than express my general concurrence that the occupation of Egypt is in the nature of a burden and a difficulty ; and that the permanent occupation of that country would not be agreeable to our traditional policy, and that it would not be consistent with our good faith towards the Suzerain Power, while it would be contrary to the laws of Europe. . . . The thing we cannot do with perfect honour

is either to deny that we are under engagements which preclude the idea of an indefinite occupation, or so to construe that indefinite occupation as to hamper the engagements that we are under by collateral considerations."

This "preaching on the text evacuation" went on until the Anglo-French Declaration of 1904, after which there was a strange silence on the part of British statesmen in office in regard to the position in Egypt. The silence was broken during a debate on our Egyptian Administration in the House of Commons in 1910. Following the murder of the Egyptian Prime Minister, Boutros Pasha, and Mr. Roosevelt's expression of opinion on the treatment of subject races, Sir Edward Grey said: "The British occupation must continue in Egypt more so now than ever."

This statement he confirmed in the House a month later, when he said:

"I fully admit that in the history of the British occupation there has not been logic, and there has not been foresight. We have drifted into the occupation of the country, but we have been there a long time, and we now have to deal, not with logic, but with facts and consequences. . . . Much mischief has been caused, without any

reason or justification, by doubts being disseminated as to whether we were firm in our intention to retain our responsibility in Egypt. . . . I believe it is absolutely essential. Many of those who refer to the subject have very little conception of the evil, the mischief, which would result if by any chance the British Government to-day left any uncertainty in people's minds as to whether they intended to retain the occupation of Egypt."

Surely we have here another acknowledged break in the continuity of British policy. Sir Edward Grey's indication of the attitude then taken up by the Government towards Egypt had been already expressed, with an added touch of cynicism perhaps, some years before by that able Imperialist journalist, G. W. Stevens, who wrote in 1898 of the Egyptian situation :

"I do not think we shall ever leave. This is awkward, because we promised to—gave a perfectly sincere promise which we have not been able to fulfil. I do not think we shall ever be able to fulfil it without wasting an enormous deal of splendid work—which we shall not do. Some day, perhaps, we shall square the situation, either by agreement or after a war. In the

meantime, the world is full of Tunises, Chautabuns, Kio-Chaus and Port Arthurs ; we need not distress ourselves. The whole world knows, in its heart, that we are staying in Egypt, and the whole world, in its sleeve, is very well satisfied."

As to the forcing of a policy upon Egypt, the impression gained by foreign communities in the country who watched events between the Armistice and February 1922 is that the Egyptians had every appearance of forcing a policy upon Britain, and that their methods of doing so were first a revolt, then continued unrest in the form of street processions, which, even when orderly, interfered considerably with business ; schoolboy strikes ; Civil Service strikes ; and also Cabinet strikes—for it is difficult to give any other name to the passive resistance practised by Ministers who from time to time refused to form themselves into Cabinets except upon their own terms. These perfectly admirable and constitutional methods were unfortunately backed up by hooliganism in the streets ; threats of, and attempts at, assassination ; cold-blooded political murders in broad daylight in crowded thoroughfares ; massacres ; bomb-throwing ; incendiarian and seditious plotting on the part of the more unsavoury, but apparently none the less popular, type of agitators.

All this could have been spared. Britain's

credit as a wise ruler of a vast Empire might have been saved, while Egyptians might not have rushed headlong down the steep place of reaction which seems to be what their first taste of independence is leading them to do.

We had an opportunity, after the putting down of the revolt in the spring of 1919, of doing what we have since been forced to do. For there was a period when the agitators were at their wits' end to know how to proceed. The country was tired out after the outburst of March and its consequent punishment ; Zaghlul was in voluntary banishment in Paris ; and a firm but liberal policy on the part of Britain might then have been instituted with excellent results. Britain might at once have made a declaration of her intention to reward Egypt for the assistance given to the Allies, and particularly to His Majesty's Government during the war, by

- (1) Giving Egyptians an increasing part in their own Government through the definite and gradual removal of British officials, the details concerning which, with the amount of compensation due to each grade of retiring officials, being duly set out ;
- (2) By speeding up the projects of Nile control in order to increase the cultivable land of Egypt ;
- (3) By undertaking to put in hand a system of adequate agricultural roads and light railways to assist cultivators ;
- (4) By promoting universal education ;
- (5) By coming to agreements with the

Powers for the proper taxation of foreigners and for the ultimate abolition of the Capitulations ; (6) And finally, by giving an undertaking that the Protectorate should be abolished on a given date and under given conditions.

Launched at the psychological moment, such a document could not have been resisted, and then indeed we might have been able to boast about our policy. Instead of which, the British Government merely promised an inquiry *under the Protectorate*, and then allowed the situation to " drift and drift and drift " (to use Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's recent expression). This decision gave the Egyptians the fillip needed to restore their courage and reanimate their weakened energy, as well as time and opportunity to mature their plans for the boycott of the Milner Mission, and to encourage the rougher elements' taste for blood by more street rioting in the autumn of 1919.

The exasperation of the British residents and the scorn expressed by the other foreign nationalities in Egypt during that and subsequent periods of inaction on the part of the British Government presumably never reached the ears of the authorities in Cairo. Even memorials sent up by responsible citizens to the representatives of H.M. Government in Cairo, urging that a definite line of policy be taken, never obtained even an acknowledgment of receipt.

It is not worth while dwelling upon those disastrous times, but it should be on record that British citizens in Egypt had to bear many insults, drawn forth by their own statesmen's incapacity for governing, not only from Egyptians, but from individuals of other nationalities. During the period of the second outbreak of rioting in the towns in the autumn of 1919 it was not pleasant to have a man say to one: "You have lost the art and power of governing; wherever your flag floats you are execrated." We were *neither governing nor getting out*, and we felt we were thoroughly despised.

It may be said in reply to the foregoing that criticism of Governments is cheap enough, for it is so easily made, and that such censure often merely displays the ignorance of the layman of the difficulties involved in the highly specialised art of governing. But no hiding behind the magnitude of the problem will alter the fact that the changes which British policy has undergone since 1880 have had the disastrous effect of ruining the trust of Egyptians in Britain's political good intentions and good faith. Moreover, if proof were needed that the Egyptians, from Zaghlul downwards, are convinced that their independence is not the result of our continuity of policy, but of their own peculiar methods of agitation, we have only to note the speeches made by

their Deputies in Parliament, and observe that they are using exactly the same methods in regard to their claim to the Sudan, openly boasting that the deeds which won Egypt's freedom will also restore to them their lost southern empire. And who can blame them for arguing ignorantly thus? They would be indeed foolish from their own point of view if they changed such eminently successful tactics.

After losing the golden opportunity of the summer of 1919, Britain had not the ghost of a chance of getting her own settlement of the problem accepted. *Istiklal el tam* (complete independence) held the field. Generous offers were made to the Egyptians in the Report of the Milner Mission, such as none of the other victorious Allies would have dreamed of making in a similar case. All were rejected. Force could, of course, have been used to obtain the acceptance of any one of them, but there were ethical and practical reasons against that method of obtaining a solution of the problem. For one thing, Lord Allenby is not the kind of soldier to care for the task of dragooning a civil population into acceptance of anything, even a good thing. In war he fights; in peace he governs, if possible, by peaceable methods. His persistently "Liberal" attitude throughout all the trouble in Egypt has been remarked upon, very often unfavourably, by British and other foreign residents.

It was commonly said in January 1922, when he was called to London, that he went, not only with the agreement he had worked out with Sarwat Pasha and his British advisers which was afterwards put into execution as the declaration of February 28, but that he carried also his resignation in his pocket. If the Foreign Office, so the rumour went, had insisted upon forcing the Curzon policy upon Egypt of not abolishing the Protectorate until a treaty had been signed, Lord Allenby would have demanded at least 80,000 troops with which to police Egypt, and, if refused, would have resigned. Knowing, however, that the British Government at that moment would not be able to face Labour and Radical criticism of such a decision, he may have felt tolerably certain that his policy of giving Egypt immediate administrative independence would be accepted. For the working people of Britain were in no mood just then to be told that there was to be more expenditure on military displays in the Near or Middle East. Herein lies the secret of the good luck which attended the Turks in the discussions which preceded the signing of the Lausanne Treaty, as well as of the change in policy towards Egypt signalled by Lord Curzon's capitulation to what the Egyptians delight in calling their "firmness," and which was actually a partial swing back to the intentions of Queen Victoria's Ministers in

1881 "to maintain Egypt in the enjoyment of the measure of administrative independence" which had been "secured to her by the Sultan's firmans." For traces of continuity of policy we search the records in vain.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE YOUTH OF EGYPT

It was not, as we have seen, the rising of the fellaheen in 1919 which won for Egypt the declaration of February 28, 1922. The fellah's wrath exploded; he took his punishment and settled down again to repair the damage he had wrought, and from him, provided no huge army were again foisted upon him to provision, no more would have been heard. For the fellah knows in his heart whom he can trust for his fair share of water, which, after all, is his main concern in life. Neither was the precipitate departure of the British official from the Administration the work of mature politicians. With the notable exception of Zaghlul Pasha, most of the older men—those, at least, who remembered the pre-Occupation days—were able to weigh up what the country had gained from British Administration, and, had not the fear of the assassin been continually before their eyes, it is more than probable that these responsible leaders would have openly stated their preference for a gradual change, in well-defined stages, rather than a sudden break with the British.

The revolt against Britain came, in reality, from the very people whose training had been in our

hands for forty years. It came from the youth of the country, whom we had failed to educate properly, who played at politics when they should have been enjoying healthy pastimes in their playgrounds, learning lessons of self-restraint through discipline in school and sport out of school, thus preparing for useful citizenship in after-life.

An Egyptian teacher in charge of some Boy Scouts at Wembley solemnly told a visitor to the Exhibition that Mohammed Ali had founded an educational system, but the British had shut up all his schools! This is, I fear, only too typical of an Egyptian's inability to face historic facts when they are not in his own favour. Mohammed Ali, to his credit, experimented with education, just as he experimented in setting up European workshops, factories and arsenals; but long before the British Occupation most of his educational schemes, like his factories and arsenals, had fallen to pieces. Mr. N. W. Senior, in his *Conversations and Journals in Egypt*, 1855, tells how these educational experiments, in which the old pasha took such pride, were all abolished by either Abbas or Said, his successors, much to the sorrow of the Frenchman, Clot Bey, who had ably seconded Mohammed Ali's endeavours to bring Europe to Egypt, and to whom had been entrusted the starting of the first medical school and military hospital in the country.

But the Egyptian teacher might with truth have complained that until the year 1890 the education of the people of Egypt was systematically neglected by the Occupying Power. The bringing of order out of administrative and financial chaos, and the provision of interest on the Debt, absorbed all the attention of the administration. It may be said that that was the proper thing. Does not honesty come first? After all, we did not go to Egypt to educate the Egyptians, but to put down rebellion and to bring their finances out of chaos. This is, of course, true, but "woe unto you . . . these things ought ye to have done and not to leave the other undone." We set ourselves the task of training the Egyptians for self-government and we "omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith."

From the time of the setting up of the Dual Control by France and Britain until 1890 the sum spent annually by the State on education amounted only to £E.70,000; it was then increased to £E.81,000, and by the time Lord Cromer left Egypt had reached £E.374,000. At that time, as Mr. J. M. Robertson pointed out in the House of Commons, at least two million sterling should have been spent on public instruction. By 1911, £E.553,000 was reached; and in 1922 the total amount spent on education, including technical, arts and crafts, and commercial schools, was £E.1,144,385. The

Zaghlul Parliament of 1924 increased the sum to £E.1,714,689.

Elementary, higher and technical education is controlled partly by the Government direct and partly by the Provincial Councils, which were given in 1909 extensive educational powers. The European colonies also provide schools for their own nationals, most of which are open to children of other nationalities, including Egyptians. At the end of 1922, when the population was 13,387,000, 454,755 children were receiving instruction in Egyptian schools, of whom 71,175 were girls, while 56,916 children of all nationalities, including Egyptians, were being educated at schools provided by the foreign communities. There are also the educational missions to Europe, consisting of Egyptian students who are undergoing a special training at the cost of the Government with a view to their being employed on their return as teachers. In addition, there are at least 400 students pursuing their studies independently in Europe, but who are under a Government supervisor.

The Mohammedan University of Al Azhar, a mosque richly endowed for educational purposes, has altered very little as regards its method of teaching and range of subjects since its foundation in the reign of the fourth Fatimite Khalif in A.D. 970. The main subject of study is the Koran (the source of Mohammedan Law), the Traditions, Arabic

grammar, a certain amount of arithmetic and geography. Its students number 5,406, of whom 506 are non-Egyptian, and are drawn from all parts of the Moslem world. The endowments provide annually £E.18,250 for bread for the students. There are five other colleges, with a curriculum similar in scope to that of Al Azhar, attached to mosques in different parts of the country.

During Mustafa Kamel's brief career the Nationalists made a great effort to found an Egyptian University more in accordance with the needs of modern Egyptians than Al Azhar, but the scheme has entirely failed to realise its founders' hopes. It has not provided for Egyptians the college education they had, and still have, to seek in foreign countries, or to turn out an adequate number of school-teachers. It has, moreover, from time to time been the subject of bitter criticisms in the Arabic Press, which have led to its financial overhauling and general reorganisation more than once since its foundation. No one, of course, is to blame for this but the Egyptians themselves, since the British authorities were expressly ruled out of any participation in its organisation by the Nationalists. During the sitting of the Zaghlul Parliament in 1924 it was revealed that there was such a great lack of teachers that the Government proposed sending more young men to Europe to train for the teaching profession. It is a moot point whether

Egyptians will ever be able to supply a higher education in Arabic that will make foreign university training a matter of choice rather than of necessity, as it is to-day. The provision of proper text-books in the vernacular seems a problem as far from solution as ever. The level of the ideas of those responsible for the Egyptian University may be gathered from the fact that recently, when this question came up once more for consideration by the Council of the University, the Under-Secretary of State for Education suggested that all that was needed was for a bright student to take down carefully the lectures of a foreign professor, turn what fell from his lips into Arabic, print the results, and then lecture himself from the text-books thus made. It is on record that a Frenchman to whom he confided his brilliant idea suggested that perhaps a gramophone record might eliminate even the necessity for employing the foreign professor!

Turning to the figures relating to the schools of the foreign colonies, we find that France heads the list by providing education for 24,000 children; Greece comes next with 10,497; Italy 9,137; America 7,211 and Great Britain with 3,360. Jews, Armenians, Syrians and others provide education for another 2,219 children. Since the war the German and Austrian schools have been closed. Their scholars in 1914 numbered 2,451.

It is impossible to imagine that any other great

European Power occupying the dominant position of Great Britain in Egypt would have been content to leave behind no impression of its culture other than that of an administration which might be described as a "good going concern." We have set upon Egypt a mark of our stewardship in finance, in the railways, posts, telegraphs and all those matters which need administrative and business efficiency, but in little else. It is remarkable that a nation which has produced so magnificent a literature as ours, which enjoys a social inheritance and a social freedom which is nowhere excelled, should have left so few signs of our culture behind after forty years' domination that a stranger entering Egypt to-day is astonished to find that the English language does not, next to Arabic, predominate either officially or unofficially ; that in the Europeanising of Egypt it is not British customs which have prevailed—except perhaps in the cut of the clothes of those Egyptians who adopt European costumes. Even in the one thing on which we pride ourselves as Britons—the law—we have scarcely made any impression.

We have not only neglected to push Egypt on in the matter of public education, we have equally neglected to bring into the country our own system of education in the form of private schools. The British population exceeds the French in Egypt

by a little over 3,000, but while the French have provided schools for 24,000 we have done so for only 3,360, and that number is due chiefly to missionary enthusiasm. We have not even provided proper facilities for the education of the offspring of British parents, let alone that of others. Before the war many of the daughters of British parents in Alexandria were sent to the German school for want of a British school. Since then the new and magnificently equipped French Lycée has claimed them, as well as boys and girls of other nationalities.

The French have everywhere triumphed over us in the matter of the provision of educational facilities. Throughout Egypt the boys' schools of the "*Frères*" or the convent schools of the "*Sœurs*" are to be found, and are subsidised by the French Government. Levantine girls and boys do not, as a rule, know English; there have been no English schools for them, so theirs has been a French education. The Cairo *midinette*, typist, shop-girl, or clerk knows French, be her nationality Syrian, Greek, Italian or "pure" Levantine, but rarely English. It is true that for a short time before the end of the war, when it was taken for granted that the British Protectorate was a definite and indisputable thing, there was a rush on the part of the foreign population to learn English. Hundreds of Levantine girls were employed as clerks and typists by the Army, and there was noticeably

more English spoken in the streets by people who were obviously not British. But within two years after the end of the war it was discovered that there was no prestige whatever to be attached to a knowledge of English ; that, in fact, the reverse was the case, and the Levantines, ever anxious to preserve their well-being among a population apt upon occasion to become hostile to foreigners, took the line of least resistance and the best business, and dropped their English and resumed their French. For it must be remembered that though most Levantines speak fluent Arabic and know no country but Egypt, they have not become assimilated with the native population.

Undoubtedly in the early days of the Occupation concessions had to be made to French susceptibilities in regard to language. Also, as Britain's position in Egypt was supposed to be merely temporary, the authorities made only such changes in existing arrangements as would ensure a stable Government, and they allowed the use of the French language, which had been adopted largely in the administration, to continue unhindered. But after the Franco-British Declaration of 1904, though we promised that the post of Director-General of Antiquities in Egypt should continue to be entrusted to a French savant, and that the French schools in Egypt should continue to enjoy the same liberty as in the past, there was not the slightest

excuse for British officials in two different departments which had been thoroughly anglicised communicating with each other through the medium of the French language. And yet this absurd habit was still in vogue during the war, and may be even yet, if those two men happen to be still in the service of the Egyptian Government. I am aware that the excuse given in one case, where a British professional man, engaged upon some important Imperial work, protested against correspondence with a fellow-countryman at the head of a department being delayed owing to its being conducted in French, was that the secretary of the department only knew French in addition to Arabic. "After nearly forty years under a British chief the secretary ought to have known his chief's language," was the only possible comment.

Can we imagine two Frenchmen in Government departments in Syria, let us say, after forty years' French administration, still writing to each other in any language but French? In forty days, if not in forty hours, the Frenchman would have had his entire department running in French, and would have felt himself incapable of doing his duty to the country he was administering or to his own in any other. But to the end of the British administration in Egypt the Briton who desired to follow the working of that administration through Government reports had to have a sound knowledge of

French. The *Official Journal* continued to be printed in French, with only certain parts in English; the Cabinet made all its announcements in French; and the laws were promulgated in French and Arabic. Of the Government's list of scientific, charitable and other societies there are only two out of eight which are British—the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the Cairo Scientific Society, which publishes the *Cairo Scientific Journal*. The Institut d'Egypte (of which French is the official language) and the Institut Français are centres of archæological and political culture which, with the Mixed Courts and the French schools, completely outweigh, from the point of view of propaganda and politics, the influence which Britain has wielded through Government departments. It is possible for a foreigner to exist quite comfortably in any walk of life in Egypt, and to carry on business successfully, without a knowledge of English, but without French it is practically impossible for him to do either one or the other.

Generally speaking, we have scarcely taken the trouble to let the Egyptians know we have an educational system of which we are proud. Victoria College at Alexandria, the building for which was designed by a French-Syrian, not by a British, architect, is a worthy educational effort on British Public School lines, but until the last few years,

through lack of support from home, it only eked out a precarious existence financially, and was unable to obtain sufficiently well-equipped masters without allowing them to swell their meagre salaries by taking outside lessons. The standard set up by this school, and the good work it accomplished among Egyptian and British boys, as well as those of other nationalities, was ample proof of what a few thousand pounds spent annually by the British Government might have done for our reputation as an enlightened and civilising Power. As for the English school in Cairo, it had long been felt that it was a disgrace that British children were the only foreign children not provided in any shape or form with a national education in the city, and, in view of the difficulties of sending them home to be educated during the war, this school for British and British Dominion children was opened. After much persuasion the British Government allowed a temporary grant to be given to the school contingent upon at least £E.600 being raised annually by the British community. But an urgent whip, pressing for funds as the only alternative to closing down the school, already burdened with a debt of £E.2,325, had to be sent round in 1923.

So much for Britain's contribution to general education in Egypt. It may be argued that since British influence pervaded the Government schools there was no need to emulate the French in their

educational propaganda. It is perfectly true that the schools of the Education Department in Egypt have been entirely under British control, but the department has dismally failed to keep the Egyptian schoolboy either to his tasks or to his play. Some day, perhaps, an educationist will take the trouble to analyse his special psychology. Obviously the lack of an understanding of his mentality by his teachers is the cause of his mental deformity to-day. Can we imagine anything so unhealthy in school-life as the forming of political committees by students who issue notices to the Press, with threats and ultimatums to editors, organise street demonstrations, incite the rabble to take part in them, and then, when these rougher elements get out of hand, leave them to pay the penalty in broken heads or worse, while the organisers disappear into safety?

Everyone who knows Egypt has a liking for the fellah. Free from the veneer of European education, he is a finer human specimen than the effendi. One can respect the fellah and make allowances for him, even when he runs amok, but the most one can feel for the schoolboy politician who has become a law unto himself, and whose conceit is only matched by his ignorance, is pity. Yet the British control of the education machine in Egypt has resulted merely in the turning out of more and more of these undisciplined future

citizens. The report of the Commission on Elementary Education of 1917 pointed out that :

“ The present uneven distribution of education also produces a disastrous cleavage in Egyptian families. Illiterate parents who possess the necessary means frequently send their sons to the primary and secondary schools, with the result that the children have not been long at school before they begin to despise their ignorant parents, become estranged from their ill-appointed homes, throw off parental restraint, and grow discontented, wayward and disaffected. This weakening of parental control among the educated youth of the country is a serious social mischief.”

“ The majority of pupils,” wrote one who knew them well, “ hold the theory that argumentation is the royal road to knowledge ; they are prepared to argue for hours upon the best wording of a rule in grammar which they are prepared to break persistently for a series of years.” They are credited with parrot-like memories but no imagination. Their first choice of a profession is the law. The Law School is overwhelmed by applications for entrance, while the Agricultural Colleges are but poorly attended. Yet Egypt depends for her very existence on agriculture. The bulk of her

population are farmers or farm labourers, and her rich men belong almost entirely to the land-owning class.

What Egypt needed from the beginning was that the Government should concentrate upon the provision of technical schools (including arts and crafts schools and agricultural schools) and to have left much of the higher education to private enterprise, if it could not afford to provide for both. For there is little doubt that the system of Western education which has been applied to Egypt has been a failure. Where a youth has had an entirely Western education, either in a French, Italian, Greek, American school, or at Victoria College, the result has been far more satisfactory than that obtained from the efforts of the Government. In the foreign schools the corporate spirit has had its effect, even though in Egypt it exists in a less marked degree than in the same schools in Europe.

Still, it is there, and Egyptian boys have benefited from it. In the Egyptian Government schools it is entirely absent. The report on education referred to pointed out that the majority of candidates sitting for the secondary examinations were not children, and that: "Narrowness of outlook, and ignorance of contemporary events, lack of general knowledge, and, worst of all, absence of interest, show that education itself is not the object which

most candidates have in view." The pious hope was expressed that this might only be a temporary phase ; that it might pass, " as all who believe in education and in Egypt hope that it will pass." But from 1919 onward the Egyptian schoolboy became the terror of the authorities, until to-day it is difficult to find anything to be said in his favour. His constant strikes since 1919 have ruined several school years, and to make up for failures at examinations he demands—and obtains from the culpably weak authorities—ever more supplementary examinations. Tampering with marks on the part of officials has recently become, too, a scandal to which the Arabic papers have given publicity—another sign of the influence of the schoolboy over those in authority.

After watching the Egyptian schoolboy as he appears in public, one wonders whether in his enthusiasm for politics there is the germ of something which, guided and trained, could be of real use to his country and himself. Nationalists, to whom I pointed out in the past the danger to the community there was in allowing schoolboys to monopolise the political arena, the waste caused, by continued strikes of the public money spent on their behalf, to say nothing of the bad effect on character, always maintained that once Egypt had obtained her independence the schoolboys and students would settle down and renounce

their political activities out of loyalty to the fatherland. Since 1922 the administration has been in the hands of the Egyptians themselves, and what remained to be done in the way of coming to a final settlement with Great Britain could not obviously be obtained by street agitation, but by statesmen in Council. Yet the records of the past two years have shown that the prophecies of the Nationalists in this respect have been falsified. The schoolboys are, if anything, more intractable than before, and Ministers are said to quake in their shoes before them !

Yet one would willingly find some hope of better things for Egypt than the decadence implied in the insubordination of her sons. Their political enthusiasm springs from their emotions. Hitherto the "emotion of the ideal" has, in the case of young Egypt, been applied destructively, the object before the schoolboys being the complete overthrow of British domination, until at last insubordination has become an end in itself. Can their emotions be used to better purpose ?

It is quite possible that the Egyptian schoolboys' unnatural bent for politics is the result of the suppressed activities of their mothers, for there seems to be little doubt that the driving force behind the students has been the *hareem*. Through her sons the Egyptian woman has taken her part in the political upheaval, and now, if only the

women can be stirred to work for social ends, the energies of the children may be turned into constructive instead of destructive directions. At present Egyptian womanhood is but feeling its way very slowly as a force in the social and political life of the country. The fight for independence made the women feel the necessity for an outlet for pent-up energy. During the demonstrations of the last few years, when masses of human beings were surging into the streets, to the amazement of onlookers, from time to time, women would occasionally appear among the crowd—ladies of the highest rank as well as denizens of the city's underworld, the certified prostitutes. The male politician did not object to this. Apparently he was quite pleased to have the assistance of the women to put him in possession of the reins of government ; but will he, now that the administration is in his hands, permit the women to take their part in the social upbuilding of the people ? I doubt whether he will be able to prevent their doing so.

There is plenty for the women to do. It is impossible to think of any side of Egyptian life which does not need attention, and, in most cases, drastic reform. During the war a Commission on Public Health in Egypt did excellent work in unveiling to the public gaze the country's sanitary and hygienic needs. A paragraph of the report ran :

"To-day the greater part of Egypt is filthy, and no self-respecting populace can be raised in filthy surroundings. As of old, Egypt is plagued by disease, and it is hopeless to expect a disease-ridden people to play their proper part in furthering the welfare of their country. The infant mortality in Egypt is appalling, actually one-third of the children dying in infancy. The verminous condition of the fellaheen shows no improvement, though lice are now known to be conveyers of typhus and relapsing fevers, which account for so many deaths."

The report pleaded for the training of children in cleanliness and hygiene, since it had been proved conclusively that nothing of permanent value could be expected from the efforts to instil sanitary ideas into the minds of mature members of the community. It stated :

"Such evidence as we have obtained clearly shows that the men of the Egyptian Labour Corps, who when with the Army have perforce had to conform to certain sanitary requirements, no sooner return to their villages than they lapse into their old habits, and fail to inculcate the lessons in cleanliness they have learned. With the history of the Egyptian Army before us nothing else could have been expected, for the
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trained and disciplined Egyptian soldier, well versed in the sanitary methods in vogue in camps and barracks, on return to his native village is soon indistinguishable from his fellow fellaheen in this respect."

An Egyptian journalist drove these facts home more picturesquely, thus :

"The majority of the Egyptians are the peasants who wear blue *gallabiyas*, most of whom cannot read and write. If a peasant wishes to have a letter written, he is often obliged to go to another village to find someone to do it for him. As for the handwriting of such a scribe, it can be deciphered only by those versed in hieroglyphics. The Egyptians know nothing about hygiene, as is proved by the stench which fills one's nostrils miles before he reaches a village. This stench emanates from the old heaps of manure which surround the villages or *ezbas*, and the drains of the mosques which pour their sewage into the canal from which the natives drink. The houses in these villages and *ezbas* are very close to each other ; their doors are small and their rooms have no windows ; and the peasant sleeps in his house with his cattle as well as with his children. The peasants dread a doctor as they dread the angel of death. As soon as a doctor makes his appearance in a village the patients are hurried away

to the fields, or are concealed under heaps of cotton-sticks on the roof. Although water is not scarce, most of the peasants are dirty ; in fact, they are afraid to take off their clothes for fear that the vermin will carry them away."

This journalist declared that the cure for this state of things was to teach the people to read and write. But that is not enough. A campaign for social and spiritual regeneration is needed, and this must be inaugurated by the women. Hitherto the authorities have pandered to the people's besetting sin—relying upon the Government to do everything for them. Attempts have already been made to persuade the new Parliament to subsidise benevolent societies, because the promoters dislike asking for subscriptions and the public dislike subscribing. Individuals need to be roused to a sense of responsibility for the well-being of their country. Egyptians do not yet realise that much of what calls out their admiration in Western institutions and social customs is the result of enthusiasm in activity for the public welfare, entailing a never-ending battle against indifference and hardness of heart. With the women working for social ends, a healthier atmosphere will be created in the Egyptian home, and, consequently, in the school and in the nation at large.

The women will probably be the first to find out

and teach their sons that democratic institutions are meaningless without an enlightened democracy ; that political freedom, unless it be followed by efforts for social regeneration, is but a tinkling cymbal ; that fine paper constitutions and elaborate electoral laws will not save an ignorant people from being a prey to the worst forms of corrupt government by cliques and oligarchies. The Egyptians will surely learn, as other nations have learned, that *Istiklal el tam* is nothing in itself ; it marks but a beginning, the opening of a door of opportunity for social betterment.

The youth of Egypt have now wonderful opportunities of making experiments in every direction of human activity. The whole world of art lies before them. The art traditions carried over from the Middle Ages are very few, and are found among the craftsmen in the Musky and in some of the out-of-the-way provincial towns. They are therefore unfettered by custom, and can strike out on entirely new lines if they will ; or they can develop and reanimate what is worth retaining of such art as still survives. As yet there is hardly any appreciation of art by the nation as a whole. Even Egypt's one sculptor is known to his countrymen only for his statue of Liberty, and is applauded less for his work as an artist than for his choice of subject. An Egyptian can appreciate the beauty of women and gorgeous apparel, but he cannot

understand anyone lingering to watch a sunset. A love of nature must be revived. The ancient Egyptians had it ; their craftsmen not only saw beauty in nature, but could express it in their work.

A modern Arabic literature has yet to be created. Writers are apparently not decided that a modern form of Arabic must be made if they are to grow in artistic expression. Nothing has been written by a modern writer, so far as I know, that is worth translating. Turn where one will, there is scope for pioneers in Egypt. Is it possible that Egyptians will be content to remain indifferent to their opportunities ? If so, there is little hope for the future redemption of Egypt, for no nation ever became great through breeding politicians exclusively.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE PRESS CENSORSHIP IN EGYPT

WE shall probably never know to what extent Egyptian Nationalism was affected by "the extraordinary folly of the censorship in Egypt," as someone aptly called it, but since the staffs of Egyptian newspapers were, without exception, ardent, even violent, political propagandists, they must have borne the brunt of its fury. As it affected English newspapers, *The Times* was right in describing the Egyptian Press Censorship as "the most incompetent, the most inept, and the most savagely ruthless censorship in any country under British control, not excepting Mesopotamia." I do not know how literate Irakians regard journalism, but in Egypt it is one of the most popular professions, and, according to a competent authority, there were, when war broke out, more newspapers published in Cairo than in London and New York put together. Men seem to succeed in Egypt as journalists who have failed in everything else. This is no doubt partly because there is so little intellectual strain upon the writers for the Arabic Press, for no one would dream of going to them for facts.

Nevertheless, the lengths to which censorship went in suppressing the truth and suggesting the false must have surprised if it did not pain them. At all events, it made them stand out as comparatively honest writers.

It has been stated that the censorship in Egypt was in the hands of the civil authorities. If so, the civil authorities were in the hands of the British military authorities. We received a never-ending flow of free copy direct from G.H.Q. in Cairo, and we were frequently either subjected to the visits of red-tabbed personages or were summoned peremptorily to their presence. We were made to believe all sorts of things. One story told us was that a special meeting of the War Cabinet was held to consider our grievances—or perhaps those of the censors; it was never made clear which—and someone, we were told, had come out from home to investigate. But nothing happened to relieve our sufferings, so probably it was only the censors who received attention. At all events, there were constant additions to their numbers to prevent overwork, while our staffs had to submit to a continual drain for war service.

On one occasion we were informed that General Allenby had sent down from Ludd special instructions as to how certain items of news of victories in Palestine, which we had already published in large type, were to be set out and republished. We did not

believe that the great General could possibly be troubling his head about such things, so, although as a rule we tried to behave with the servile submission expected of us, for once we refused to do as we were told. We felt we really did know how to "dress our windows," and we even went so far as to intimate that if the General would get on with his good work in Palestine we should not fail in our task of spreading the news of his victories. We gained the impression that some people, in addition to the official censors, read us, and had nothing better to do than report their opinions about us. These may have been generals convalescing in some of the Cairo hotels. There were at one time an extraordinary number of them living at Shepherd's and the Continental.

A journalist who has come through six years of the censorship in Egypt may consider he has served a stern apprenticeship to a kind of journalism which is as repugnant to him as bayoneting is to the ordinary citizen. It's war, he says, and he does it. But when the war is over, the citizen who has been serving as a soldier gives up his bayonet and forgets—except in dreams, perhaps—that he ever handled one. Not so the journalist labouring under "the extraordinary folly" of the censorship in Egypt. The war had been over nearly three years, yet we were still pestered by the censorship. It was moribund, it is true, before it was abolished,

but it rested like a curse upon us, and at last we even pitied those poor wretches, the officials, who had to bear the ignominy of carrying it on. It was like a corpse, old and stinking. The great men of the Press Bureau had long ago gone to better posts, or retired, and only the small men were kept at the task of tending its unburied bones. The military authorities had even washed their hands of it, and it was left to linger on, a mouldy and shameful thing, under the civil, i.e. the Anglo-Egyptian, authorities.

We do not know what would have happened to us if we had maliciously and with intent published a paragraph, a line, a word, that had been blue-pencilled ; suspension, deportation, imprisonment—we never knew whether some carelessness, some inadvertence, might not bring one or all three of these upon us. It was not only news matter and articles that had to be submitted (three proofs of each) to the Press Censor's office, but danger lurked even in the "cheap prepaid" advertisements. Sport, too, gave us infinite trouble. The accounts of matches played between — and — were doubtless entertaining to the initiated, but the general public were puzzled, and the soldiers complained bitterly of this curious method of announcing their football victories. We tried camouflaging the names of regiments renowned for sport, but even that did not always save us, for there was

trouble once, I remember, over the "East Anglians!" We shuddered up to the end when we opened a letter asking for an explanation forthwith, and signed Dep. Chief Press Censor, and we choked with fright when we had to answer him over the telephone. It took us usually so long to find out how anything "contrary," etc., could have occurred among our polyglot staff, whose maternal tongues were severally Arabic, Maltese, French, Italian, Greek, English, Welsh, and Scotch, that usually a third and still more peremptory note on the subject would have arrived ere we had been able to gather the requisite information.

Many innocent persons, seeing daily blank spaces—often whole columns, white and staring—in their papers, imagined that as the war caused a shortage of metal we were obliged to economise our lead. To what they put down the blanks after the war, when they became far more numerous, I do not know. By that time our readers had probably ceased to wonder at them, for in Egypt one becomes accustomed to almost anything. But we of the Press never really got accustomed to the censorship, only to the vexation and worry it caused us.

We had our private correspondence opened and read long after the Armistice, and even our tradesmen's bills examined and the envelopes stuck down and sent to us through the Press Bureau. We understood the military censorship of letters during

the war, of course, but were quite unable to comprehend why the officials of the Press Bureau had the power in 1919 to demand from the Post Office to have certain persons' letters sent to them before delivery. It was not surprising that sometimes we purposely expressed our feelings about censors in general in our letters, hoping they would be read, for the supreme ignorance of these people on the subject of how a daily paper with a large subscription list is got out, was nothing less than maddening. Still, as I have said, one pitied them sometimes. Does any of them still feel occasionally in his sleep the sickening sensation of being told he was to be fined five days' pay and warned that he might be dismissed for letting a comparatively innocent piece of news slip through? For that actually happened to an underling at the Press Bureau when *The Thing* was on its last legs. In May 1921 it was finally abolished, but it brought little freedom for us, except that fewer proofs had to be pulled. The editorial staff were continually reminded that they were working in a portion of the British Empire which was under martial law, and even if there were no actual censorship in force we continued to have reason to quake and tremble. And what made it harder was that we never could take our readers into our confidence about our troubles.

On the last day of December 1921 I wrote home :

" In a sense what we are now undergoing is worse than the censorship, for under that you submitted your proofs, and when they came back to you, and you had attended to the blue-pencillings (listening to the things the foreman said as he pointed to the clock), your responsibility was over, or you hoped it was, and you went home to sleep the sleep of the injured innocent. But though the censorship has been gone eight months, the other terror still remains. Martial law has never been removed, and though it has for months on end hidden its fierce presence, as, for instance, in Alexandria just before the May riots took place, yet at times it blazes forth again, and you may catch it if you are not careful. We are continually haunted with the thought of ' What will *They* say? Can *They* possibly object to this? Will *They* misunderstand that? ' It is not a question of ' What is Truth? ' with us, but ' How much of Truth dare we say? ' We would no more think of criticising the doings, the orders, the appearance of the military authorities than we would of flying. We hesitate to chronicle the event of a soldier being run over, much less the fact that he was out of bounds when it happened. Only the other day we mentioned that the town was being kept in order wonderfully well, considering all things. There had been an attempt to form a procession, but the streets had been cleared by the military authorities. We knew

the streets were being cleared, because some of our staff who had to come that way telephoned to us that they could not get to the office for that reason, and they said armoured cars were about. So we published these facts, thinking our readers would feel reassured to hear that order was being kept in the town. But the next day we were brought to our knees and made to publish the information that it was not the military but the police who had cleared the streets, and that the armoured cars which members of our staff had seen barging into the crowd (their own words) were there *merely by coincidence*! Ah, well; though the coincidence was felt by the crowd, which dispersed, our reprimand left us limp, as usual. Like the malaria patient, we always live with the painful apprehension that 'it might come on at any time.' "

It was a terrible position for an eminently respectable paper to find itself in, especially after having successfully come through years of the "savagely ruthless" censorship. For we were very different from the mushroom growths of the Press around us, to whom suspension became an almost chronic condition. The combined period of service of three of our staff amounted to 108 years, and I can only draw a veil over their feelings when, at last, in spite of all our vigilance, we were suspended. . . .

During hostilities we put up with almost anything the Censors might do in the hope that

somehow or other we were helping on the war. But when it was over we still had to be subjected to this sort of thing :

“ Press Censorship,

“ February 24, 1919.

“ I wish to bring to your notice that the leader in this morning's *E— G—* was not published in exact accordance with the Censor's modifications.

“ The end of the last sentence ‘ effectively helped ’ has been changed by me into ‘ effectively enabled to do so,’ and thus an appreciable modification was introduced in the meaning of the sentence. The alteration was clearly marked in red ink, the usual blue-pencil not being sufficiently legible for the purpose.

“ Will you kindly let me have your explanation ?

“ I enclose proof sheets for your inspection and should be obliged if you would return them.

“ (Signed) —, Lt., G.S.I.,

“ For Deputy Chief Press Censor.”

The Deputy Chief was a clever young Syrian gentleman for whom the officer had signed the letter. Our reply was a justification of our delinquency on the score of good English, and ran in part : “ I have already explained to you by telephone why the last sentence of the leader was not

published according to your alterations. You will notice that the ending on the office proof was chaotic. I finished it by one word, *helped*, deleting the rest. I then saw that *enabled to do so* was the ending put to the sentence in the Censor's proof, but as it would be quite ungrammatical (there is no answer to be got from the sentence if the question 'To do what?' be asked), I left *helped*. It will be noticed, moreover, that certain words are left hanging in the air. Obviously these words should have been cut out also if those which followed were not allowed to pass . . ." and so on. Could anything have been more absurd, even in *Alice through the Looking Glass*?

Fatuous! Of course it was! But what was far worse was the way in which, during the period which followed the Armistice, the question of self-determination was dealt with. During the war, as I have said in other chapters, the Arabic newspapers, no less than the English, were served out with copy applauding the theory of self-determination and extolling the ideals for which the Allies were fighting—the freeing of subject nations. Here is part of a protest sent to the Chief Press Censor in Cairo on March 11, 1919, after an article had been ruthlessly dealt with by a Deputy C.P.C. :

"DEAR SIR,—The leading article was written this morning with the object of drawing a moral

in a very mild form for Egyptians at the present juncture, and in it you will see a reference to the latest telegrams reporting President Wilson's speeches and also a quotation from the Covenant of the League of Nations. The Local Press Censor has seen fit to alter the actual wording of the President's preamble to the Covenant, and has put 'among our enemies' instead of 'in some instances by some Powers,' and has cut out 'before we use them for our own interest.' The cutting out cannot be objected to so much, although it may be a case of *suppressio veri, suggestio falsi*, and I have therefore taken the liberty of deleting the deliberate alteration of the President's words, and have put dots in both cases."

It must have been this sort of thing which added fuel to the fierce fire of Nationalism and helped to produce that deplorable state of implacable hostility towards the British administration and that lack of faith in British goodwill which characterised the fight for independence.

There is only one reason that can possibly be found to explain the folly of the censorship in Egypt. Those who organised the Press Bureau undoubtedly greatly exaggerated the known veneration of Oriental people for the written word, and they showed an excessive fear of the cunning of

Arabic writers and readers for finding hidden meanings in apparently innocuous passages of print. Thus articles which passed the Censor for Arabic papers often were not allowed to be reproduced in foreign translations of the native Press, for fear that the Egyptian politicians would think weight was attached to what they had written. On the whole, it would have been far better for British prestige to have allowed from the beginning nothing whatever to appear in the papers except the telegrams, which were already heavily censored before they were issued to the Press, and the articles sent out by the military authorities, rather than have kept, at great expense to the country, a number of officials who might have been better employed than in using their linguistic knowledge for the ignoble purposes of the censorship in Egypt. The severe repression of the Arabic Press under martial law during the disturbances did not in itself do so much harm as the attempts of the Censors to mislead the public; for, as I have already mentioned, editors who, in 1924, criticised the Zaghlul Government were subjected to far harsher treatment than they experienced under British martial law.

The fear of the bureaucrats in Cairo of what meaning the Nationalists might read into published matter is only paralleled by the bogey set up by certain politicians and writers about the veneration Mohammedans are supposed to feel for the

Caliphate. The policy these people maintained for years was that the Turk must be treated gently, whatever abominations he might commit, because any severe restraint placed upon him meant so much religious hatred stirred up against Britain among Mohammedan subjects throughout the Empire on account of the Caliphate. This idea prevailed until the world saw the Turks treat the Caliphate¹ with contempt; and yet no Moslem turned a hair! A little common sense in both cases would have brought about a recognition of the fact that even Orientals are human beings, and may be the better for being dealt with honestly and straightforwardly instead of by attempts to meet craft and subtlety with further craft and subtlety.

¹ Quite possibly, if the Egyptians succeed in their ambition of obtaining the Caliphate for their ruler, which, in spite of denials, is known to be the object of the Cairo Caliphate Committee, there will be found British politicians who will argue in the same way about the Egyptians and the Caliphate as others have done about the Turks in relation to the Caliphate.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE MURDER OF THE SIRDAR

THE manuscript of this book was almost completed when the news of the murder of Major-General Sir Lee O. F. Stack, Governor-General of the Sudan and Sirdar (Commander-in-Chief) of the Egyptian Army, horrified the British people, and brought the Egyptian question once more prominently before the world, this time in a lurid light. The Sirdar's death on November 20 of bullet wounds, inflicted in the streets of Cairo the day before, was the culminating crime in a long series of assassinations of British officials which had become a feature of political life in Cairo since 1921.

The immediate result of the murder was the presentation of a Note by the British Government to the Egyptian Government, making the following demands: (1) An apology for the murder of the Sirdar; (2) A thorough inquiry into the crime; (3) Prohibition of political demonstrations; (4) Payment of £500,000 to the British Government; (5) Withdrawal of Egyptian troops from the Sudan and of Egyptian officers in Sudanese battalions, which would be formed into a separate Sudan Defence Force, owing allegiance to the Sudan Government; (6) The indefinite extension of the

area to be irrigated in the Gezira district of the Sudan ; and (7) The retention, pending the conclusion of a further Agreement on the subject, for the protection of foreign interests in Egypt, of their position and powers by the British Financial and Judicial Advisers and the officials of the European Department of the Ministry of the Interior.

Zaghlul Pasha accepted the first four demands, but did not comply with the rest, whereupon British forces occupied the Custom House at Alexandria as a warning that the terms must be accepted. Zaghlul Pasha resigned the premiership, and a Cabinet was formed with a conciliatory policy towards Great Britain by Ziwar Pasha, President of the Egyptian Senate. Since then the Egyptian Parliament has been dissolved, and a general election is in progress as this book goes to press. The defections from the Wafd or Zaghlul Party bear out the statements made in a previous chapter that Zaghlulism has failed to keep the Egyptian nation united, and has also been instrumental in bringing about the first blow to the new dignity of the country.

Of the terms of the Note for the settlement of the crisis the sixth, regarding the extension of the Gezira irrigation area, has been severely and justifiably criticised, not so much on account of what it actually implies—a reference to ch. xviii. will show that much more land can be irrigated in that

district without harm to Egypt—but because it arouses once more fear and distrust, and rekindles the passions which raged in 1919 and 1920 regarding the allocation of Nile water between Egypt and the Sudan, passions which were only assuaged by the favourable report of a Commission appointed in 1920 by the Egyptian Government (on which an American sat), to investigate the projects of Nile Control which were being so bitterly criticised.

Mr. Chamberlain admitted in the House of Commons on December 15 that the wording of the Note in this respect was not happy, and he announced that a Commission would be appointed with a neutral chairman to make an inquiry into the amount of Nile water available for the Sudan. Although the matter had been gone into exhaustively by the former Commission, the appointment of a new Commission by Great Britain, and the acceptance of a seat upon it by an Egyptian, may be regarded as a concession on both sides, for hitherto the Egyptians have steadily refused the proposals made to them for a Nile Control Board, to which the present Commission may lead. There is hope, therefore, of a settlement of this question which, because of its absolutely vital importance to Egypt and its growing importance to the Sudan, should never have been brought into the field of political warfare.

NOTES

NOTE : The Communication, after referring to the causes of hostilities breaking out between Britain and Turkey, ran :

“ From the facts above set out, it results that the rights over Egypt, whether of the Sultan or of the late Khedive, are forfeit to His Majesty.

“ His Majesty's Government have already, through the General Officer Commanding His Majesty's Forces in Egypt, accepted exclusive responsibility for the defence of Egypt in the present war. It remains to lay down the form of the future Government of the country, freed, as I have stated, from all rights of suzerainty or other rights heretofore claimed by the Ottoman Government.

“ Of the rights thus accruing to His Majesty, no less than of those exercised in Egypt during the last thirty years of reform, His Majesty's Government regard themselves as trustees for the inhabitants of Egypt. And His Majesty's Government have decided that Great Britain can best

fulfil the responsibilities she has incurred toward Egypt by the formal declaration of a British Protectorate, and by the government of the country under such Protectorate by a Prince of the Khedival Family."

The reasons for the choice of Prince Hussein are then given, and the document continues :

" As regards foreign relations, His Majesty's Government deem it most consistent with the new responsibilities assumed by Great Britain that the relations between Your Highness's Government and the Representatives of Foreign Powers should henceforth be conducted through His Majesty's Representative in Cairo."

And further :

" In the field of internal administration, I am to remind Your Highness that, in consonance with the traditions of British Policy, it has been the aim of His Majesty's Government, while working through and in the closest association with the constituted Egyptian Authorities, to secure individual liberty, the spread of education, to further the development of the natural resources of the country, and in such measure as the degree of enlightenment of public opinion may permit,

to associate the governed in the task of Government. Not only is it the intention of His Majesty's Government to remain faithful to such policy, but they are convinced that the clearer definition of Great Britain's position in the country will accelerate progress towards self-government."

There is nothing in the document to preclude Egyptian Ministers and ex-ministers from demanding to know Britain's intentions now that the war was over.

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*It should be mentioned that when the Cotton Control was abolished, the British Government devoted its share of the profits (about £1,000,000) to the provision of pensions for certain men of the Labour Corps and of compensation for the dependents of men who were killed or who died while serving.

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*Instead of making the customary call at Abdin Palace, he merely ignored the existence of Sultan Fuad. It is true that the Sultan (now King) Fuad was not at the time very popular, and Zaghlul played weakly into the hands of those who looked upon their ruler as the "puppet" of the British. Since his assumption of the title of king of independent Egypt there has been a decided change in the general attitude to their monarch, who is a great-grandson

of Mohammed Ali the founder of the dynasty. The hero's attitude to the ruler of Egypt and his breach with Adly Pasha, the Prime Minister, which followed immediately after, could not fail to have an effect upon his following, which had hitherto been unanimous in its devotion.

‘The reader must not compare the wages earned in the Sudan with those obtained in Western industrialism, as some people are inclined to do. Tenpence a day, in some parts of the Sudan, provides as much comfort to a labourer as ten times that amount provides for a workman in Britain who has not the benefit of free “sun-power” to relieve him of the chief burdens of his life—the provision of clothing, shelter and food to meet the rigours of his colder climate.

A Labour Committee, set up by the Government to report upon labour difficulties of a few years ago, still watches over the labour market with the object of securing as much uniformity as possible in the scale of unskilled workers' wages, and to prevent indiscriminate or competitive recruitment of labour, especially in certain areas, but otherwise to interfere as little as possible with the flow of labour. It is expected that the cotton-growing scheme at Gezira will attract men from a distance, but the permanent tenants are for the most part local inhabitants.

